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Dear Mrs Allen

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Burbage Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 17 December 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in May 2017, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- improve the clarity of feedback to staff so that they know what they need to do to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss

the actions taken since the last inspection. I met with the subject leaders for English and mathematics, the coordinator for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the coordinator for the pupil premium. I also met with a group of pupils. The school improvement plan and other action plans were evaluated. I undertook a learning walk in all year groups with senior leaders. I scrutinised a sample of pupils' work books with the headteacher.

Context

The headteacher of Burbage Infant School began working with the school on a temporary basis from October 2017 and was appointed as substantive executive headteacher in January 2018. The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2018 as the leadership structure of both schools was reorganised. There have been several appointments to the teaching staff and a teacher has been seconded from the infant school. The chair and the vice-chair of the governing body took up their posts in September 2017.

Main findings

Following a period of instability, you have worked rapidly to establish a new leadership team. This team now have a clarity of vision and a renewed focus on providing the best for all pupils. Leaders now have a comprehensive understanding of what the school does well, and they have swiftly tackled underperformance. Following a review of governance, governors now understand their roles and responsibilities. Communication has improved, and governors now have access to accurate assessment information. Governors now have a better understanding of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve further.

Leaders have clear plans in place to enable the school to continue to improve. These plans demonstrate how leaders are providing training to systematically address gaps in teachers' knowledge and how they are monitoring the impact of this training. Plans are regularly evaluated and reviewed. Some training has taken place in conjunction with the infant school to ensure that the curriculum builds on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. Subject leaders from both schools are now working together. There is a planned progression of skills, but this development is recent and has yet to become fully embedded. Pupils with whom I spoke feel that their learning is exciting. They can explain how trips and visits bring learning to life through visiting Bosworth Battlefield or through seeing real mummies in a museum.

Provisional assessment information for 2018 indicates that pupils' attainment at the end of year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics at the expected standard has strongly improved and is now above the national average. Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has also improved, though it is still below average in writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils made less progress than their peers. Leaders have acted with rigour to make sure that all teaching staff have a

clearer understanding of pupils' prior attainment and the progress that they need to make. Any inconsistent progress is identified through regular reviews of pupils' achievement. Pupils now make more consistent progress in Year 3 because transition between the infant and junior school has improved. Leaders have high expectations and progress is improving.

You have implemented an ongoing review of the quality of teaching and learning in the school. Leaders of mathematics and English have had the opportunity to work alongside colleagues. The teaching of mathematics is now more consistent. Changes to the teaching of reading in some year groups have engaged pupils effectively. Leaders conduct regular learning walks and scrutiny of pupils' work. However, feedback to teachers is not always precise enough so that teachers understand what they need to do to improve further.

Leaders have developed a comprehensive curriculum for the systematic teaching of spelling, which builds on prior learning. There is an established system for pupils practising spelling corrections in their books, and pupils know that they can use a dictionary to help them if they are unsure about how a word is spelled. Attainment in spelling has improved. However, not all pupils systematically check their own work for their spelling mistakes.

Leaders have reorganised the way in which pupils receive additional support through forming an 'inclusion team'. Leaders closely match support to pupils' needs and organise it so that pupils do not miss out on good-quality class teaching. The coordinator for pupils with SEND monitors the impact of the additional support. Regular communication between class teachers and teaching assistants ensures that all staff know each pupil's targets. Strategies, such as the use of support cards, or packs of reinforcement activities, help learning to continue when the pupil is back in the classroom. The newly appointed coordinator for the pupil premium has recently received training and has evaluated the impact of the school's provision for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders are putting into place plans to offer more tailored support that better meets the individual needs of disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils now have opportunities to learn about Britain as a multicultural society. Leaders have planned the religious education curriculum to be taught in line with the local agreed syllabus. Pupils now learn about a wider range of faiths. For example, they know that the Qur'an is a sacred text and that Muslims must be clean before they touch it. Pupils reflect on the architectural beauty of mosques and can explain which places are special to them and why. A recent whole-school project engaged pupils with the stories of refugees. Pupils responded with sensitivity through poetry and art and could describe empathetically how these children's lives were similar to, as well as different from, their own.

External support

The local authority has provided effective support to the school during the period of

instability. They commissioned a review of governance, which enabled governors to effectively review their performance and identify areas where they needed further training. As a result, there is now an effective committee structure in place and governors hold leaders to account with more rigour.

The school works closely with the Loughborough Learning Alliance, who have provided support for senior, middle and subject leaders. Leaders are part of networks through the Teaching Schools' Alliance, which enables them to become more familiar with good practice.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Hazel Henson

Her Majesty's Inspector