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Nasira Frost
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Dear Mrs Frost

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Greenfield Primary School and Early Years Centre

Following my visit to your school on 18 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 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.

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:

- develop more links with other schools so that leaders, staff and governors are able to observe and learn from strong practice in other settings
- support teachers in developing their understanding of what constitutes 'greater depth' in writing.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders, the current chair and recent chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. You and the deputy headteacher accompanied me on a series of short visits to

classes and I also looked at work in pupils' books and the school's assessment information. I spoke informally with pupils throughout the day and also met with a group of pupils to discuss life in school. I evaluated the school's action plans and scrutinised other key documentation.

Context

There have been a number of changes to staffing since the last inspection. At the time of this monitoring inspection, three teachers were absent from school on maternity leave. The number of pupils on roll has dipped and there are mixed-age classes in a number of year groups because year groups are of different sizes. The chair of governors took up his position after the last inspection and other new governors have also joined, although there are still two vacancies on the governing body.

Main findings

You and your fellow leaders have an honest view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You have used this as the basis for developing the school's improvement plans, which are well tailored to the school's main areas of weakness. Subject leaders for mathematics and English have also produced useful plans to address areas specific to their subjects. The activities that have already been undertaken are having a positive impact on the quality of education in the school. For example, there is now a more consistent, well-planned approach to the teaching of mathematics, which is leading to an increase in the proportion of pupils working at the standard the school expects for their age group.

The quality of governance was identified as an area for improvement at the previous inspection. Governors have responded decisively to the findings of a review of governance and now have a good understanding of where the school needs to improve. They have worked hard to access training to improve their knowledge and understanding of their role and have successfully recruited new governors who bring different skills to the governing body. They have high aspirations for the school and are increasingly challenging school leaders to ensure that the school moves forward at a good pace.

The previous inspection team asked leaders to make more effective checks on the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils. You have strengthened your processes for assessing how well pupils are doing in English and mathematics and are now using a clear system for identifying those groups of pupils who are making particularly good progress and those who may need further help to catch up. This improved overview of performance is then regularly discussed with teachers so that teaching is increasingly well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers say that they are now being held to account more rigorously by leaders, particularly for the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils.

You commissioned a review of the effectiveness of the spending of the pupil premium funding but have yet to receive the final report. However, this has not stopped you and the governors from pressing ahead with work to improve the use of this additional funding. The governors established a working party to ensure that they have better oversight of pupil premium spending and its impact, and the assessment leader ensures that careful checks are made on outcomes achieved by these pupils. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 in 2018 were disappointing. However, the picture for disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 1 was much more positive, as their attainment was in line with that of their classmates and they were catching up with other pupils nationally. The school's current assessment data shows that the difference in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has diminished considerably across the school, indicating that pupil premium funding is having a positive impact on these pupils' learning.

The previous inspection also asked you to make improvements to the quality of teaching in the school in order to secure good progress across all year groups. Staff say that they have had the chance to visit each other's classes to learn from the good practice that was already in place. This, and good access to a range of professional development activities, has had a positive impact on teachers' skills and confidence. The work of subject leaders in mathematics and English has also played an important part. Teachers confidently follow the mathematics curriculum, developing pupils' number fluency and teaching them to apply their skills to mathematical problems. In reading, pupils say that the innovative use of 'reading dogs' to remind them of different aspects of reading comprehension has helped them to improve their understanding in this area.

It is clear that teachers are now challenging most-able pupils more. The school's assessment information, supported by work in pupils' books, shows that more of the most able pupils are working at a high standard. This is particularly the case in mathematics, where many of the oldest pupils have successfully tackled complex concepts, including early algebra. There is also evidence of pupils producing some high-quality writing, but this is less common than work at the higher standard in reading and mathematics. Teachers' assessments of pupils' writing are sometimes over-generous. This is, in part, because teachers have had few opportunities to compare and moderate the best writing in their classes with that in other schools. As a result, they do not have a clear picture of what they should expect in terms of writing at greater depth.

You were also asked to make sure that work was better matched to pupils' abilities and interests. I observed phonics being taught across key stage 1 and it was clear that the teaching had been carefully planned to match the phonics knowledge of each group of pupils. Pupils enthusiastically told me that they enjoy learning in a wide range of subjects and that they also like the different educational visits that they are able to go on. Evidence in pupils' books confirmed that work in subjects such as history and geography is typically well planned and engaging and that

effective links are made between subjects to help pupils to see the purpose of their studies. For example, pupils' work on castles was linked to using Ordnance Survey maps to identify suitable castle sites. The maps used covered the area around Castleton that the pupils were going to on their residential visit.

The atmosphere at Greenfield is one of happy and purposeful endeavour. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and that they feel safe and well looked after. They have positive attitudes to work and relationships between staff and pupils are good. One striking feature of the school is the beautiful artwork on display in the corridors, much of which reflects the school's core values.

External support

The school is drawing effectively on a wide range of external support. You and the governors have sought support from external providers and consultants to help you to improve the quality of teaching and begin to raise standards. For example, training that you arranged has sharpened teachers' use of questions to assess pupils' learning.

You have also engaged well with the local authority, which is supporting and challenging school leaders appropriately as the school improves. The local authority has recognised that opportunities for your school to network with others locally have been limited. It has therefore organised further support from a multi-academy trust. This is intended to allow school leaders, staff and governors to engage with and learn from successful practice in schools in similar contexts. This package of support is in its infancy and so it is too early to gauge its impact.

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

Yours sincerely

Neil Dixon

Her Majesty's Inspector