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Ms Pat Adams
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Ms Adams

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Crumpsall Lane Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 11 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 three 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 last section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that more pupils in Year 1 reach the expected standard in the phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) screening check
- be clear who is responsible for checking whether the planned actions for improvement have been achieved.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and your leadership team, the early years leader, three governors, and nine subject leaders to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I spoke with a group of eight Year 5 and Year 6 pupils to gain their views of the school. We visited the early years unit to observe children learning. The associate headteacher accompanied me on visits to each class to observe pupils at work. I evaluated the school's improvement plans. I scrutinised records relating to pupils' achievement and the minutes of governing body meetings.

Context

Since the previous inspection, seven teachers and four teaching assistants have left the school, while six teachers and six teaching assistants have joined the school. One parent governor resigned from the governing body and a new parent governor was appointed.

Main findings

You know that the school has required improvement for many years. You are determined to change the fortunes of Crumpsall Lane Primary School so that pupils receive the very best education and care. You are ambitious for the school. You and your staff share the governors' vision for improvement. Your school improvement plan guides your efforts to realise this vision. The senior leadership team manages key aspects of school improvement effectively. Staff praised the support and guidance from senior leaders which help them to do their job well. Morale is high.

The findings of the previous inspection reflected the stage you had reached on your journey to improve the school. Strengths in leadership, teaching, and pupils' personal development and behaviour were clear in the report. Inspectors emphasised the need to improve pupils' outcomes across the school, particularly for boys and the most able pupils. Inspectors asked you to develop the management skills of middle leaders, and to strengthen improvement planning.

You have improved pupils' outcomes. More children are reaching a good level of development in the early years and so are ready for Year 1. In 2018, attainment improved significantly in key stage 1 and key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics compared with 2017. The proportion of pupils achieving greater depth also increased significantly. Your work to challenge the most able pupils has paid dividends. Your information on pupils' progress across the school shows that gaps in pupils' learning are starting to diminish. These results are promising. Yet fewer pupils in

Year 1 reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check compared with 2017. You have analysed the reason for this and taken action to remedy this dip.

Your work to improve the quality of teaching and learning has been the key factor in improving pupils' outcomes. Teachers and teaching assistants work as a team. Staff value the opportunities for training and professional development offered. Training sessions allow staff to share good practice across the school and be confident in the approaches they use in class. Through professional discussions, you set high expectations for classroom practice. Systems and structures ensure a consistent approach to teaching across the school. This means that no learning time is lost as pupils move classes. Improved assessment techniques mean that staff know the stage each pupil has reached in their learning and plan work at the right level for each ability group. This includes pupils who join the school mid-year. Pupils comment that work is 'much harder' now than it was a year ago.

You have made changes in the early years to create one unit for the Reception Year, which has easy access to the outdoors. The result is a large, bright setting with a well-planned outdoor area that captures children's imagination. Leadership in the early years is improving. Training and coaching activities from senior leaders have resulted in a confident and competent leader of the early years unit. She knows the strengths of the provision and what needs to improve. Your focus on staff modelling clear language, building children's vocabulary and teaching phonics is starting to pay off. Staff modelled new vocabulary as they worked with children in the 'pizza shop' and the 'coffee shop'. Staff encouraged children to talk clearly as they cycled round the newly created cycle park in the outdoor area. Resources are organised so that children engage in their learning. For example, they wrote Christmas greetings in cards on the writing table, shared books as they 'read' in the library, and used solid shapes to build structures in the mathematics area. A new arrangement for pupils joining the school in Reception has led to a swifter start to learning. Children's needs are identified quickly and support planned so that children do not fall behind from the start.

You have improved middle leadership. Several leaders follow accredited courses to increase their expertise. Staff are well matched to the aspects they lead and understand their responsibilities. Coaching from senior leaders has increased their confidence and competence in leadership activities. Through a range of activities, middle leaders have a secure understanding of the progress pupils make in each subject and so contribute to the improvements in pupils' outcomes. Strong accountability measures are in place, which include middle leaders reporting their findings to governors.

Pupils are friendly and welcoming. They are happy to talk to visitors and are proud of their school. I observed pupils concentrating hard and enjoying their learning. Pupils I

spoke with told me that the best thing about the school was the teachers, because they keep them safe and happy.

You, your staff and governors know the strengths of the school and the action needed to improve areas that are weak. Your plan sets out clear priorities for improvement. These include the recommendations from the previous inspection report and those you have identified from your evaluation of the school's work. The plan covers improvements expected from 2016 to 2019. You specify appropriate actions to be taken, the expected effect and the resources needed. But it is not clear who checks whether the planned action has been achieved or not.

External support

The school benefits from effective support and challenge through termly visits from the local authority quality assurance lead to check on the progress of improvements.

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

Yours sincerely

Eileen Mulgrew
Senior Her Majesty's Inspector