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Ms Audrey Wright
Field End Junior School
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Dear Ms Wright

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Field End Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 3 April 2019, 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.

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:

- ensure that teachers challenge the most able pupils consistently well in mathematics to help them to make the progress of which they are capable
- strengthen teachers' confidence in assessing reading and selecting books for individual pupils, which meet their needs
- streamline information presented by senior leaders to governors about pupils' achievement, so that governors can more regularly and readily understand the impact of pupil premium funding.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, middle leaders, governors and a local authority adviser. I spoke with the head of school improvement for Hillingdon to discuss the actions taken to support the school since the previous inspection. The school development plan was reviewed. I spoke with some parents at the start of the school day and talked to pupils in lessons.

I observed learning in lessons with the headteacher and scrutinised a sample of pupils' books to review the progress they have made this year.

Main findings

You have used external support well to support you in responding to the challenges you have faced in improving the school since the time of the previous inspection. You have been rigorous in planning for improvement and your evaluation of the school's work is accurate. As a result of a range of 'non-negotiables' you have introduced, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is more consistent and improving. Consequently, there are some early indications that pupils' outcomes are also improving.

Middle leadership is developing well; leaders are clear on their roles and responsibilities and all have supported you in ensuring consistent approaches to teaching, learning and assessment in each year group.

Pupils who left Year 6 in 2018 attained standards in reading, writing and mathematics that were in line with the national average. The current Year 6 pupils are making stronger progress in reading, writing and mathematics than seen previously. However, there is still much work to do to ensure that all pupils across the school make consistently strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information presented by leaders about the progress pupils have made this year is sometimes based on over-cautious assessment practices by some teachers. It gives an inaccurate and overly negative view of the progress pupils have made. It also suggests that expectations of what pupils can achieve are still too low. You recognise this issue and have begun to tackle it through moderation activities and through your monitoring processes. Your monitoring of the quality of teaching is accurate and robust. You are clear and precise in your understanding of what teachers need to do to strengthen their skills further.

Teachers have successfully implemented the mathematics programme consistently and pupils are working within age-related expectations in each year group. Leaders have supported teachers in devising ways to support pupils of different abilities. This has led to some improvements. For example, when pupils struggle to grasp a concept or demonstrate misconceptions in lessons, teachers provide them with

additional specific input the following day. This is having a positive effect on their learning. It enables teachers to address issues more swiftly and supports pupils to make progress. However, teachers do not yet consistently challenge the most able mathematicians to 'go for the challenge' as swiftly as they could. Sometimes this means that the most able pupils do not move swiftly to the most challenging work and make the progress of which they are capable.

Leaders have supported teachers to implement whole-class reading lessons. Their sound rationale for this is to expose pupils to quality literature and to develop their key reading skills. You have also implemented intervention sessions for pupils in Year 3 who fell behind with their phonics development in key stage 1. You are a passionate advocate of reading. You have inspired pupils, staff and the community by acquiring a 'reading bus' situated in the playground which is soon to be launched, to promote a love of reading.

Teachers' assessment of individual pupils' reading ability is based largely on tests. The outcomes of these tests inform the selection of texts for pupils to read individually. You agreed that teachers would benefit from further professional development to help them to assess pupils' reading skills when they read with them. This would support teachers to identify precisely pupils' next steps in reading on a more regular basis, and will help them in selecting books which help pupils to read confidently and independently.

Governors continue to be highly committed to supporting you in moving the school forward after the previous inspection. However, the review of governance did not happen swiftly enough following the inspection, so progress in improving this aspect of the school's work was slow. Nevertheless, following the review in January, governors have strengthened their systems and structures for holding leaders to account. The roles of 'link governors' have been reviewed and there is now a sharper emphasis on holding leaders to account for the impact of the pupil premium funding.

Records of meetings show that governors ask challenging questions about standards of teaching and learning, but these are not always related precisely enough to pupils' outcomes. Leaders ensure that governors receive a considerable amount of information about pupils' progress and achievement. However, you and governors agree that a more precise, succinct overview of the school's assessment information would help them to gain a swifter, clearer picture of pupils' progress throughout the school year.

The differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally have not been reduced significantly since the time of the previous inspection. However, the review of the pupil premium spending has ensured a sharper focus on the provision for disadvantaged pupils across the school. Teachers, leaders and governors are consistent in their understanding and their vision of what needs to be done to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. There is

some early indication in pupils' books that their progress is improving, particularly in mathematics.

External support

After a slow start, the school has responded positively to support brokered by the local authority. The excellent support provided by the local authority to develop middle leaders has had a good impact so far. You rightly plan to capitalise on this support for all middle leaders. As a headteacher of a school requiring improvement, you have been reflective and responsive to support for senior leadership. Your plans to develop capacity within the leadership team are well considered.

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

Yours sincerely

Ruth Dollner
Her Majesty's Inspector