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Ms Nicola Webb
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Webb

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ravenhurst Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 October 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2017. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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 a good school.

However, as a matter of urgency, leaders and governors must ensure that an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding takes place.

Evidence

You were absent during the inspection. However, meetings were held with the deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, leaders responsible for English, mathematics and attendance, three members of the governing body, including the chair, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. A range of documentation was scrutinised, including school improvement and subject plans, the latest self-evaluation of the school's

performance, the most recent information on pupils' progress and attainment, and documents relating to safeguarding. I conducted a tour of the school with the deputy headteacher, had lunch with a group of pupils and visited classes to see pupils and staff at work. I spoke with several parents at the beginning of the school day.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, three teachers have joined the school. The chair of governors resigned during the summer and was replaced at the start of term by the previous vice-chair.

Main findings

You and other senior leaders have reacted swiftly to the findings of the previous inspection. The school's plans for improvement contain specific actions and the timescales within which these must be achieved. The plans also ensure that there are opportunities for governors to challenge and monitor progress frequently. As a result, improvements are taking place at a rapid pace.

You have ensured that leaders challenge less-effective teaching, and this has led to improvements in pupils' outcomes. Now, following lesson observations, you and the deputy headteacher provide detailed feedback to teachers on their strengths and areas for development. This has resulted in the most able pupils being challenged more consistently, particularly in mathematics. You undertake frequent scrutiny of the work in pupils' books to assess, for example, how well teachers are following the school's feedback and marking policy and the impact this is having on pupils' progress. Finally, you have ensured that pupils' progress meetings are held with each teacher, so that any pupil falling behind is quickly identified and given the help they need to catch up.

You have given teachers opportunities to share good practice through increasingly strong links with a local outstanding primary school. Teachers and subject leaders have reviewed pupils' work alongside staff from other schools to ensure that the judgements they make about pupils' attainment and progress are accurate.

Teachers now update pupils' progress and attainment information more frequently. The deputy headteacher analyses this information for each year group in order to identify any particular strengths and weaknesses. Current assessment information provided by the school indicates that large proportions of pupils are on track to be working at age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the academic year.

Teachers now have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. In mathematics, for example, pupils are encouraged to attempt a 'hot' or 'spicy' activity in order to challenge themselves. Teachers are improving at identifying gaps in pupils'

knowledge and understanding at the start of a mathematics topic. Consequently, some pupils are progressing quickly because learning is planned more closely to match pupils' abilities.

You have ensured that teachers support pupils to develop their writing by implementing a new feedback and marking policy. This policy allows pupils the opportunity to improve their writing by, for example, improving spelling and vocabulary and by adding punctuation. One pupil in a Year 4 class had written, 'As the sky began to darken, a huge thick cloud appeared.' Pieces of writing are proudly displayed around the school and awards are given in assemblies to recognise those pupils who have achieved well.

The recently revised behaviour policy has had a rapid impact on reducing the incidence of poor behaviour. The assistant headteacher now analyses the school's records regularly, and this information is monitored by a governor to ensure that leaders are held to account. Currently, the number of recorded incidents is 25% lower than this time last year.

Since the last inspection, the attendance improvement officer has significantly improved the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are strong systems in place to monitor those pupils whose attendance is a concern, as well as rewarding those pupils whose attendance improves or is always good.

The governing body has commissioned an external review of governance. They now monitor the school's performance more closely. For example, recent visits include a safeguarding audit and a check on the whole-school implementation of the behaviour policy. Governors have undertaken relevant training in order to fully hold leaders to account for their actions. As a result, they are increasingly able to hold leaders to account.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding has not yet been undertaken. This should be done as a matter of urgency. Leaders and governors do not yet have an accurate enough view of how this funding is allocated and monitored. It is not clear, for example, how the most able pupils are benefiting from this additional funding.

The school's arrangements for recruiting and checking staff before they start working at the school meet current requirements. Procedures for staff to report any concerns they have regarding a pupil's welfare are clear and well established. Pupils and their families who require extra support receive it promptly.

In all the classes we visited, pupils' attitudes to learning were extremely positive and they were fully engaged in their work. There is a purposeful atmosphere in the school. The behaviour of the pupils seen was consistently good.

Parents with whom I spoke were overwhelmingly positive about the school. Many of them told me their child was happy, safe and making good progress.

External support

The local authority has brokered good support for the school through the teaching alliance. This has involved training for leaders and governors, as well as ensuring that judgements leaders have made about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are accurate.

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

Peter Stonier
Her Majesty's Inspector