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Mr John Bailey
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Dear John Bailey

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Haylands Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 May 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 February 2016. 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 to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- develop the assessment system to check pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics
- conduct robust self-evaluation to identify strengths and remaining weaknesses accurately
- strengthen the school improvement plan by including current priorities for improvement as well as those identified in the previous inspection, which have not yet been fully addressed.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy and assistant headteachers and subject leaders. I also met the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I conducted a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. You led me on a tour of the school and provided me with a wide range of the school's documentation to scrutinise. We discussed the actions taken since the last inspection. I reviewed pupils' work with your English, mathematics and science leaders. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, there have been a few changes to the leadership and governance of the school. There is a new chair of the governing body. Several teachers have been appointed to the posts of subject leaders for science and foundation subjects. A new special educational needs coordinator has recently joined the school and a class teacher has joined the school.

Main findings

Since the inspection, you have rightly concentrated on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Following the inspection, you issued clear expectations for all staff and pupils, called your 'non-negotiables'. These higher expectations are having a positive impact on the behaviour and progress of pupils. During my visits to classrooms, the atmosphere was purposeful and pupils were enjoying a range of learning activities. You were able to demonstrate the steps taken to improve teaching through bespoke coaching of individuals, alongside whole-staff training. The work of your lead practitioner for teaching and learning has had a positive impact. Pupils explained what they were learning clearly and enthusiastically and were enjoying grappling with some challenging tasks. Parents who I spoke to were full of praise for the school.

Pupils' outcomes in 2016 show attainment above national levels at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment at the end of key stage 2 was below the national average for writing and mathematics; however, it was in line for reading. Pupils' progress in reading was well above national levels.

Disadvantaged pupils showed particularly strong progress in reading. You are tracking the performance of disadvantaged pupils more closely and taking effective steps to enhance their rates of progress in both English and mathematics. You have clearly raised expectations of pupils' achievement across the school. Pupils in upper key stage 2 have some catching up to do, following a legacy of poor teaching when they were in key stage 1, and staff are striving hard to raise pupils' attainment, as well as their rates of progress. In 2016, progress in writing and mathematics was in line with national levels by the end of Year 6.

You have revised your policy for giving feedback to pupils to help them improve their work. We saw children in the early years and pupils in other years responding well to adults' encouraging, yet probing, approach. Teachers provide extra challenge or more support, depending on pupils' responses. Your monitoring shows that your expectations for written feedback have been implemented in a more consistent way, which has particularly helped pupils to improve their writing. However, senior leaders' work scrutiny has been confined to English and mathematics and you are less informed about pupils' achievement in other subjects.

Your deputy headteacher, who is also the mathematics subject leader, has a clear vision for further improvements in teaching and learning. She pursues her expectations with determination, and checks for impact systematically. Work in the most able disadvantaged pupils' mathematics books shows increasing challenge, although there is scope for more reasoning. Similarly, the assistant headteacher, who is the English subject leader, shows clarity and resolve in her approach to improving writing. Sensibly drawing on advice from a local authority adviser, she led a range of actions, including the purchase of more challenging and engaging books for pupils to read. In staff training, she emphasises the importance of appropriate planning and is checking that her expectations of higher standards are being met through regular lesson observations and work scrutiny. As headteacher, you have encouraged and enabled these senior leaders to contribute significantly to improvements at the school.

You have made a useful start on developing the skills of subject leaders appointed since the previous inspection. A local authority adviser linked to the school has provided helpful training to new leaders on how to approach their roles, and the leaders I met were keen to develop their different subjects and their own leadership skills. Subject leaders have addressed staff meetings and are now starting to check how well colleagues have improved their practice in teaching subjects other than English and mathematics. Leaders' initial monitoring, supported by work in pupils' books, shows that there is much to do. In science, for example, there is a welcome increase in content, but teachers' expectations of standards are too low. Some misconceptions in pupils' work are not corrected. The science leader also acknowledges the limited coverage of scientific enquiry throughout key stage 2. However, she is seizing opportunities for the development of science education at the school and is working towards accreditation through the primary science quality mark.

So far, there is little systematic assessment of pupils' progress through subjects other than English and mathematics. The recommendation made in the previous inspection, that subject leaders have a clear view of the performance of pupils across all subjects, has therefore not yet been met. The focus by senior leaders and governors on raising standards in English and mathematics has limited improvements in the teaching of the wider curriculum. Actions need to be taken to address this, without overwhelming teachers, so it will need careful planning.

The chair and vice-chair of the governing body are rightly proud of the improvements that have taken place at the school. The new chair brings useful educational experience but needs to ensure that school leaders are held to account robustly by evaluating the impact of their actions taken on pupils' sustained progress across the curriculum.

External support

School leaders and teachers are benefiting from effective support provided by advisers from Hampshire local authority who have played an important role in driving improvements at the school. The link adviser offers appropriate challenge and support. Her training for the new subject leaders is welcome, particularly since their leadership development is at such an early stage.

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

Yours sincerely

Theresa Phillips
Her Majesty's Inspector