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Mrs Nikki Lawton
Headteacher
Pebble Brook Primary School
Balmoral Avenue
Crewe
Cheshire
CW2 6PL

Dear Mrs Lawton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Pebble Brook Primary School, Cheshire East

Following my visit to your school on 6 October 2014, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2013. 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders and the Chair and Vice Chair of the governing body. A telephone discussion took place with a representative of the local authority to evaluate the action that has taken place since my first visit. I also met with a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6, to listen to their views about the school. I made brief visits to three classes in Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Reception, to consider the quality of teaching and learning. I scrutinised a range of documentation concerning the school's work, for example unvalidated assessment information relating to pupils' outcomes in the 2014 national tests, as well as evidence of the achievement and attendance of pupils currently in the school. I also looked at a small sample of pupils' written work, records of the school's monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, pupil and parent surveys,

and external evaluations of the school's work. The single central record was checked and found to be in order.

Context

Three teachers have left the school since my last visit in November 2013, and four have joined: a new deputy headteacher, a Year 1 and a Year 2/3 teacher respectively and a teacher sharing a job in Reception.

Main findings

In the year since the section 5 inspection that judged the school to require improvement you, your senior leaders and governors have very rapidly driven across the school the improvements recommended by the inspectors. You have all shown great determination and energy in galvanising the whole staff to embrace more innovative and effective ways of working. The impact of these improvements is evident in the significantly improved achievement of pupils in 2014, many of whom join the school from low starting points. Information held by the school indicates that this improved performance is on track to be at least maintained and in some cases increased in summer 2015.

The large majority of pupils currently in the school are making and exceeding expected progress at a much faster rate than last year. The attainment and progress of boys and girls, those with a disability or special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding) show no significant gaps in achievement compared with other groups in school or nationally. The achievement of the most able pupils is also higher than in previous years.

The school's extremely rigorous systems for tracking pupil progress continue to hold to account very effectively all those responsible for pupils' achievement. You make a painstaking and very frequent analysis of the impact on each pupil of every kind of support provided. You do not hesitate to discard quickly anything that is ineffective and to put a more effective programme in its place. Your wise judgement leads to good value for money in your use of resources.

A key element in your success has been the rigour evident in your new, very transparent system for ensuring that all teachers meet the increasingly high expectations that you have set for their performance. Your records of monitoring and evaluation show that the judgements that you make about the quality of teaching are firmly based on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Targets for improvement are sharp and highly tailored to teachers' different levels of expertise and experience. The school provides high-quality continuing professional development to challenge staff further and support them in improving their work.

The teaching I observed during my visit was purposeful and engaged the pupils' well in their learning. A highly consistent quality in marking was also evident. Your own

monitoring records clearly show the progress of previously underperforming staff towards becoming at least good teachers. They are proud of their increasing skills and keen to improve further. You and governors have not shied away from making difficult decisions about staffing where there has been any underperformance.

The school has a highly inclusive ethos and pupils' behaviour, including their attitudes to learning, is very positive. Consequently, attendance is improving, exclusions are very rare and conversations with pupils and surveys of their views confirm that they enjoy school very much. They are confident, polite and articulate and express great trust and respect for both teaching and non-teaching staff, because they help them to feel safe. Parent surveys show that they have very few concerns about any aspect of the school's work. This is because you have a strong commitment to your wider community and seek imaginatively to encourage parents' increasing involvement in the school's work.

Governors have contributed much to the school's improvement. They are knowledgeable professionals who see their own leadership and management of governance as key to the school's present and future success. Governors therefore keep their practice under regular review and are keen to undertake training to improve it further. Governors have worked effectively to be able to ask challenging questions of the school, gaining a very accurate and more independent view of its strengths and areas for development.

You and your senior and other leaders have brought all these improvements about by thoughtful and carefully phased actions, beginning with the building of a strong, senior leadership team, which has been a central factor in your rapid journey towards becoming a good school.

The significant improvements over the last year in pupils' achievement, their improved attitudes to learning and the consistently strong teaching, governance and levels of accountability that you have established across the school clearly demonstrate the school's capacity to improve still further. This is further confirmed by your success in tackling all the recommendations from the last full inspection in 2013.

External support

You, senior leaders and governors are well supported by the local authority and have taken full advantage of Ofsted's regional improvement seminars and training organised by the local authority. You also have drawn very effectively on the expertise of external consultants and other local schools to support the improvements made in the quality of teaching and learning and of the school's self evaluation. You have strong community partnerships with local employers and the local football club, which further enrich the pupils' experience and help to raise their aspirations.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Cheshire East.

Yours sincerely

Susan Wareing
Her Majesty's Inspector