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Mr Neil Moore
Carr Hill Primary and Nursery School
Tiln Lane
Retford
DN22 6SW

Dear Mr Moore

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Carr Hill Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 17 June 2015, 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 2015. 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 and other senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school action plans were evaluated, a number of documents relating to pupils' progress tracking data were seen and the minutes of governing body meetings were reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised and you took me on a tour of the school where we visited all classrooms where pupils were working.

Context

New leaders for the early years, English and mathematics are in place for next term. One new governor has joined the governing body and a clerk has been employed to take minutes at all meetings of the full governing body and its committees. External

reviews of both the school's governance and the use of pupil premium funding have taken place.

Main findings

School leaders and the governing body have acted quickly in response to the last inspection. They have considered each of the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report and made plans to address these.

There is a very detailed post-inspection action plan. This builds upon the school's existing plans for improvement but brings forward many of the proposed completion dates. The plan clearly identifies what needs to happen, when, and who is responsible. This will assist in holding leaders, other staff and governors to account for the results of their actions.

A number of positions within the school's leadership team have been changed. The recent appointments of the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher have strengthened the school's senior leadership team and its effectiveness in monitoring and improving standards of teaching. New subject leaders in English and mathematics are bringing additional expertise which is being shared across the school and is already having an impact on pupils' work.

Teachers' marking of work is increasingly detailed and encourages pupils to respond to challenging comments and questions. Pupils are given time to respond and to make necessary corrections to their work before they start the next piece. However, teachers' comments are not specific enough to help pupils improve their work further.

There are more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge. They are given an increasingly wide range of challenges and investigations which are helping to make sure that their learning is secure and well understood.

Pupils of all ages are improving their comprehension skills. The reading programme which links books to computer-based questions is encouraging pupils to read more and allows teachers to assess each child's progress very quickly. As a result, the quality of pupils' vocabulary and their responses to questions about what they have read are improving.

Pupil progress meetings are taking place more often. Leaders and teachers meet more regularly to talk about the progress of each pupil and this has meant that extra support is being re-directed to pupils who need it, more quickly. The achievement of groups such as disabled pupils and those with special education needs, those in receipt of the pupil premium and the most able pupils, are more closely monitored. As a result, there are early signs that rates of progress are increasing.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium is underway. This is helping school leaders and governors to make sure that the school is making the best use of this extra funding for children who are disadvantaged. In addition, the school has made links with another local school which has been identified as using this funding very well.

An external review of governance has been completed. This has helped governors to identify what they do well and how they can improve further. As a result of this review, a clerk is now employed to take minutes at all committee meetings as well as meetings of the full governing body. This is ensuring that there is an accurate record of these meetings which shows the effectiveness of governors in holding school leaders to account. Governors' visits to the school are now recorded more formally and used by the governing body to confirm information and reports provided by school leaders. The governing body is increasingly involved in action planning and has identified individual governors to monitor different aspects of school improvement such as in the early years. This is helping the governing body to be much more precise about the responsibilities and expectations of staff and governors.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has supported the school through a very effective education improvement adviser. She has worked with the school leaders and governors to improve the quality of school self-assessment and offers a high degree of challenge to senior leaders to account for their actions. She has also helped the school to link with other schools in the area to share good practice.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Nottinghamshire.

Yours sincerely

Stephen McMullan
Her Majesty's Inspector