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Sally Alford
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Alford

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

Following my visit to your school on 9 December 2016, 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 March 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 last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. You and I visited a number of classes, speaking to pupils about their learning and looking in their books for evidence of progress. I considered a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, the latest self-evaluation of the school's performance, assessment information showing the current progress of pupils and the school's single central record of staff and volunteers.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, you became headteacher in September 2016

following the retirement of the previous, long-standing headteacher. Prior to this you had been the school's deputy headteacher. The school's current deputy headteacher is leaving at the end of December and you have made an external appointment of a new deputy to commence in January 2017. You have also made two assistant headteacher appointments from existing staff, who will also take up their new roles in January. There have been a number of changes in staffing as a result of teachers taking posts at other schools. Following an external review of governance, the governing body has reduced in number as part of a reconstitution process. An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium has also been completed.

Main findings

Leaders and governors have continued to pursue improvements at the school with a sense of urgency and purpose. You have built upon the improvement work started by the previous headteacher and have a clear vision of what the school needs to do to improve further. Staff and governors told me they felt re-energised by your enthusiasm and ambition for each child to succeed.

Leaders are increasingly effective in monitoring and evaluating the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes. At half-termly progress meetings leaders hold teachers to account for the performance of pupils. These meetings are effective in securing improvement because there is a greater focus on individual pupils' progress and attainment than was previously the case.

Leaders have ensured that teachers understand the rates of progress needed for each pupil at least to reach and, in the case of the most able, exceed the levels of attainment expected for their age. Leaders and teachers use information that tracks pupils' achievements to plan and review the impact of additional support, particularly for the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This has increased teachers' expectations of what pupils of all abilities and backgrounds can achieve.

Work is usually well matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers reflect on what pupils can do and how to extend their learning further. For example, in writing, pupils begin their learning with an unsupported piece that is assessed by the class teacher. This helps the teacher to identify and address gaps in the pupils' learning, before re-assessing pupil's progress at the end of the unit of work.

Work in pupil's books shows that the majority are making progress that is often at least good over time. However, there are still inconsistencies between classes and year groups. For example, in mathematics, not all pupils get enough opportunities to use and apply their developing skills or to exercise reasoning when coming to a conclusion. As a result, learning is not consistently well embedded for all pupils.

Governors have benefited from the external review of governance. They are very

clear about the role they have to play in securing school improvement and the information they need to ensure that this is happening. Governors are much better at checking the accuracy of the information on pupils' performance and are more effective in challenging leaders as a result.

Leaders' and governors' monitoring and evaluation of the use of pupil premium has improved as a result of the external review, recommended at the last inspection. Governors are now keenly attuned to the additional cultural and academic needs of disadvantaged pupils. They are much more effective in holding leaders to account for the impact of this additional funding on pupils' achievements.

Pupils' outcomes in 2016 show that pupils' progress in key stage 2 continues to be less strong than in key stage 1. Leaders have acted to ensure that all staff understand that each pupil's achievements are the responsibility of all who work at the school. This growing sense of collective responsibility has enabled staff to identify 'flight paths' for each pupil's attainment during their time at the school and ensure that progress is on track to meet or improve upon each individual's flight path.

External support

Leaders and governors continue to receive levels of support from the local authority officer that reflect the newness of the headteacher to the post. Both the headteacher and local authority advisor believe that the quality of support is effective in improving the impact of leaders on school improvement. They expect the level of support to reduce as the headteacher and her new leadership team become more experienced.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen McMullan
Her Majesty's Inspector