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Rachel Rice
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Dear Mrs Rice

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Deanshanger Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 24 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 November 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:

- ensure that teachers in key stage 1 consistently and fully implement the school's policy on the presentation of pupils' work
- regularly check that teachers provide pupils who are working independently with sufficiently challenging work and with clear instructions so they know what to do
- ensure that teachers consistently reinforce the school's expectations of pupils' behaviour during lessons so that pupils are always on task and ready to learn
- make sure that plans for development contain benchmarks through which the governing body can easily measure the impact of the actions taken.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the leaders of English and mathematics, members of the governing body and a group of pupils. I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. We conducted a learning tour of the school. I evaluated the school's arrangements for safeguarding and its plans for improvement. I considered documentation relating to your checks on pupils' attainment and progress, the school's policy for presentation of pupils' work and information about pupils' behaviour. I reviewed the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. I observed pupils learning in all classes. I looked at a range of pupils' work with you, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the leader of the early years. I scrutinised minutes of meetings of the governing body.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, staffing has remained mostly consistent. One teacher for a class in Year 1, however, has since left and a new member of staff has been appointed. One teacher of a class in Year 3 has returned from personal leave.

Main findings

Your determination to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is clear. You have successfully used a combination of external support, peer coaching and checks on teachers' assessment of pupils' work to tackle areas in need of development.

You have taken swift action to accelerate pupils' progress by promptly reviewing the learning of mathematics and reading. Current information shows that most pupils are making faster progress in English and mathematics. Pupils in key stage 2 now benefit from more opportunities to extend and deepen their knowledge and understanding in mathematics. Pupils have regular opportunities for problem solving and reasoning in the Reception Year and in key stage 1. Specific training and a review of teachers' planning by the leader of mathematics have ensured that all pupils are now developing their reasoning skills. The most able pupils are well challenged and can confidently explain their mathematical strategies. The teaching and learning of reading have improved. Current information shows pupils are making good progress in reading throughout the school. This has been achieved by effective use of bespoke interventions and carefully chosen resources to support pupils.

Using the guidance of a national leader for education, brokered by the local authority, you have brought about improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers increasingly match work to pupils' abilities and give them opportunities to extend their learning. Nevertheless, when pupils work

independently they are not always clear about what they should do and do not have sufficient challenge. In addition, some pupils do not follow behaviour expectations and are off task during lessons. As a result, they are not ready to learn and take longer to finish their work.

You succinctly check the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils and senior leaders talk confidently and knowledgeably about the progress these pupils make. You carefully monitor the quality of teaching and learning, and ensure that best practice is shared effectively throughout the school through peer coaching. You also share expertise effectively within your local cluster of schools.

You wisely appointed a senior leader for the development of presentation in pupils' books. Following an extensive audit, a comprehensive policy is now in place and the leader closely checks on how effectively it is used. Presentation has swiftly improved and is consistently better in key stage 2. It still lacks consistency, however, in key stage 1.

Leaders have secured significant improvements in the school's response to bullying. Specific lessons and workshops have improved pupils' understanding of bullying and how it differs from other inappropriate behaviour. The involvement of governors and consultation with parents and pupils have ensured that anti-bullying initiatives are sustainable into the future. Pupils feel supported and say they feel safe. They say they have people they can trust if they need to talk. Initiatives like the 'Be nice to others' committee and the 'listening ear' have proved popular with pupils.

The school's website is up to date and informative. It now meets statutory requirements.

An external review of governance has taken place. Governance is now strong and continues to improve. Governors talk knowledgeably about the priorities for their school. They rigorously challenge and question senior leaders about the actions to improve the school. Your plans for the school's development are rigorous and detailed. They link appropriately to subject leaders' action plans for accelerating pupils' progress. Governors talk in depth about the school's plans for improvement. They feel the plans are precise and enable the governing body to hold you to account. You acknowledge that these plans still lack the specific, measurable data that would allow leaders and the governing body to check more effectively how much improvement the plans have brought about.

External support

Since the last section 5 inspection, the local authority has provided support to the school through direct training and coaching for staff and governors. As a result of this support, teachers have refined their skills, so they have improved the quality of teaching and learning. Targeted guidance has meant that subject leaders' monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment has improved in English and

mathematics. Governors have benefited from specific training to improve their skills and understanding of the school, including interpreting assessment data relating to the school's performance.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Innes-Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector