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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mr Neil Mawdsley
Headteacher
Amesbury Archer Primary School
Shears Drive
Archers Gate
Amesbury
Wiltshire
SP4 7XX

Dear Mr Mawdsley

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Amesbury Archer Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 19 June 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 January 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in January 2016, the school was also judged to require improvement.

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 attendance is at the same level as the national average overall for all groups of pupils
- ensure that good-quality teaching, learning and assessment are consistent across English and mathematics so that outcomes reflect the potential of each individual pupil

- ensure that the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities improves.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, and members of the governing body, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. All classes were observed and workbooks were looked at. Documentation on monitoring activities and the impact of performance management were read.

Context

Since the previous inspection, a new deputy headteacher and a special educational needs coordinator have been appointed. After many staff changes within the past two years, staffing has now stabilised.

Main findings

You have an astute awareness of the areas that need to improve and a detailed plan is in place to make sure that all are acted on quickly. This includes more rigour and regularity in the monitoring of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This is undertaken by senior and middle leaders. To support this you have appointed leaders of the different key stages, since the last inspection, to add capacity to the leadership team. This adds an extra layer of accountability. The leader of the early years foundation stage is one of these middle leaders. The success of this area of the school was commented on in the last inspection report. The same high standards are being maintained and this sets the bar for the leaders of the other two key stages.

As leaders, you have high expectations and are ambitious to improve the outcomes for pupils throughout the school. There have been several long-term absences but you have managed the situation well. Outcomes continue to improve despite there being several temporary staff employed.

The tracking of pupils' progress is far more efficient and is used effectively to evaluate the success of teaching in different classes and subjects. As a result, when pupils underachieve, interventions are undertaken swiftly and purposefully. This has led to much-improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils as well as others. There is further work to do to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are as successful.

The audit undertaken to evaluate the use of pupil premium funding has recognised that much effective practice has been put in place. You have adopted the actions suggested and worked hard to ensure that teachers adapt their teaching to support the disadvantaged pupils more proficiently. This has had a positive impact. You and

your staff have diminished the differences between disadvantaged pupils and others considerably. In several year groups and across the subjects of English and mathematics, there is no difference. In some cases, disadvantaged pupils are achieving higher outcomes.

There are several new governors who have the skills necessary to monitor the impact of the work of the school. Your drive and ambition are recognised and this is a significant reason why local people wish to step up to this important role.

Visits to lessons showed that pupils are engaged in their learning and keen to do well. This is significant as there had been issues with behaviour previously, but by using skilful teaching assistants with the most vulnerable pupils, you are managing the situation within school. There is some variability in teaching across phases and this needs to be addressed swiftly so that pupils experience consistency when learning, especially with regard to the challenges offered.

External support

You are making good use of the external support from Wiltshire local authority. The school improvement adviser meets with you regularly and provides effective objective validation of what is working well and what needs further improvement. You act on this advice well.

The external adviser for the audit of pupil premium funding has given constructive advice which has been heeded and has led to better outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks
Her Majesty's Inspector