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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mr Stuart Turner
Acting Headteacher
Killamarsh Infant School
Sheffield Road
Killamarsh
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S21 2DX

Dear Mr Turner

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Killamarsh Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 6 November 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 February 2017. 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 for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of how pupil premium funding is allocated to individual disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you; the temporary acting headteacher; senior leaders responsible for English, mathematics and the early years; two members of the governing body; a member of the multi-agency team; and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. A range of documentation was scrutinised, including school improvement and subject plans, the most recent information on pupils' progress and attainment, a range of pupils' workbooks and documents relating to safeguarding. I conducted a tour of the school with you and the temporary acting headteacher, and visited classes to see pupils and staff at work. I spoke with several parents at the beginning of the school day.

Context

The headteacher at the time of the previous inspection has now left the school. You were then appointed as acting headteacher. During the summer and autumn terms, when you were unavoidably absent, two temporary acting headteachers supported the school, one in each term. The day of this monitoring visit was your first day back. Your return to work includes a planned handover period between yourself and the current temporary acting headteacher.

Main findings

Despite recent and unforeseen changes in leadership, the acting headteachers, staff, governors and the local authority have ensured that standards of achievement, behaviour and the quality of teaching have improved. The plans for school improvement contain frequent monitoring opportunities and specific timescales that ensure governors can hold leaders fully to account. We agreed that some of the actions do not always exactly match the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.

Leaders have accelerated the progress of disadvantaged pupils in the early years. This is also the case in reading and mathematics for current pupils in Year 2. Teachers now have a greater awareness of the individual needs of the disadvantaged pupils and the barriers that may be preventing them from learning. Careful assessment of the progress made by disadvantaged pupils means extra support is given swiftly. Consequently, they catch up quickly. Leaders hold teachers accountable for the progress of disadvantaged pupils through specific performance management targets. An experienced governor is responsible for ensuring that the pupil premium funding is allocated and monitored effectively. We agreed that a next step is for leaders to carefully track and monitor the funding for individual disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.

The experienced, well-trained governing body challenges leaders about the progress of all pupils. A governor attends termly school progress review meetings between

leaders and the local authority adviser. These meetings give governors opportunities to observe challenge from, and to ask questions of, the local authority. Observations from these meetings are fed back at full governor meetings. This ensures that governors are fully informed about the performance of the school.

Leaders have ensured that accurate assessments take place frequently in reading, writing and mathematics. This information is discussed by leaders and teachers at pupil progress meetings. Consequently, pupils who require extra support are provided with it quickly. As a result of this accurate assessment, teachers are now matching work more closely to pupils' abilities. For example, in Year 1 mathematics books some pupils were accurately adding using spots on dominoes. Other pupils were adding together numbers rolled on dice, with the most able pupils adding together larger numbers.

Frequent assessments are also in place to track pupils' progress in phonics. Consequently, pupils are taught in smaller groups using appropriate strategies. In the most effective sessions, adults use a variety of activities and techniques to engage and stimulate pupils. They also check and address any inaccuracies in pupils' use of phonics quickly.

Leaders have developed a strong link with the local multi-agency team. This has meant that rates of persistent absence and attendance have improved quickly. For example, in April 2017, 28 pupils had an attendance rate lower than 90%. By July, this had reduced to only four pupils. This is because the family support worker is offering help to those families who require it. Leaders are now offering rewards for those pupils who attend school regularly. Pupils are eager to attend because certificates and the 'attendance bear' are given to individuals and the class with the best weekly attendance.

In 2017, the proportions of pupils meeting and exceeding the expected standard at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics were above national averages. Current assessment information provided by the school indicates that this is likely to be repeated in 2018.

The early years leader has made effective improvements to the indoor and outdoor learning environments. There are now designated areas that closely match the early years curriculum. There are many opportunities to be creative and develop reading, number and writing skills. For example, some children were writing lists for Santa. Another group was using magnets to 'write a list of objects that are magnetic.' Resources are bright, stimulating and accessible. Children use the 'choose it, use it, put it away!' mantra in order to keep the environments tidy. Assessments are frequent and accurate. The activities are therefore matched to children's abilities and interests. Consequently, children are engaged and their learning is sustained. In 2017, the proportion of children, including disadvantaged children, who achieved a good level of development, was above the national average.

The school's arrangements for recruiting and checking staff before they start working at the school meet current requirements. Procedures for staff to report any concerns they have regarding a pupil's welfare are clear and well established. Pupils and their families who require extra support from outside agencies receive it promptly. Parents with whom I spoke were overwhelmingly positive about the school. Many of them told me their child was happy, safe and making good progress.

External support

The local authority has provided effective support. Appropriate training has been delivered to governors and staff. The adviser has supported developments in phonics and the early years. There are opportunities for staff to share good practice with other schools and moderate pupils' work to ensure that the attainment judgements are accurate.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Stonier
Her Majesty's Inspector