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Miss Jo Rice
Headteacher
Henbury Court Primary Academy
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Dear Miss Rice

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Henbury Court Primary Academy

Following my visit to your school on 13 July 2018 with Andy Brown, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring 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 monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

Senior leaders and the academy trust are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- improve the attendance levels of Reception children so that they do not miss out on their learning
- help pupils to develop their vocabulary and extend their reading skills so that they fully understand what text they are reading and are able to answer questions about it.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, your deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and the leader for early years. I also met with five middle leaders, four governors and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust. The focus of the meetings was to assess the impact on standards of action taken since the last inspection.

Both the lead inspector and the team inspector carried out joint learning walks with either yourself or the deputy headteacher. A range of documents was considered, including the single central record. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

Since the inspection in January 2017, there have been a number of staff changes, including the appointment of a new early years team.

Main findings

You and other senior leaders, including governors, are ambitious and determined to continue to drive and sustain improvements. Since the previous inspection, you have set a clear direction of travel and enabled the hard-working staff team to move a considerable way along the school improvement journey.

The school's improvement plan to tackle the areas requiring improvement, and identify relevant actions, is set within an appropriate timeframe. Plans are specific and they clearly identify the staff responsible for leading and taking actions. The regular reviews and moderating activities mean that you are able to compare your judgements on the school's improvement with those of external colleagues.

Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. They carry out frequent checks on the quality of teaching through learning walks, analysis of assessment information and looking at pupils' work in their books. Regular discussions with teachers about pupils' progress enable leaders to draw conclusions about how different groups are performing. Leaders use this information well to plan the next steps and deal with any emerging issues. This includes acting quickly to ensure that any gaps in staff knowledge are addressed. Teachers benefit from coaching by more experienced colleagues and learn well from each other.

Teaching, learning and assessment have improved since the previous inspection. This is because you have provided professional training for teachers to develop their skills and knowledge in teaching reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching across the school has improved. It is characterised by well-planned sessions that are tailored carefully to meet the needs of all pupils. Explanations are clear, and skilful use of questioning ensures that pupils understand fully what they are learning. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to help pupils make better progress

and resources are very well used. Pupils enjoy positive relationships with the adults who work with them. They listen carefully and behave well in class. Pupils are happy to help others to learn and work well with each other.

Monitoring activities are tightly focused on the areas of improvement identified at the previous inspection. You hold regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress and check on work in pupils' books. Information gathered is analysed thoroughly and used to provide next steps for teachers and inform action plans. Together with your middle leaders, you have already analysed the outcomes for the current Year 6. In reading, you have identified that a greater focus needs to be given to ensuring that pupils can explain what the text is about and respond confidently to questions about it. Subject leaders have a clear understanding of their role and take part in monitoring activities with senior leaders. They provide effective support and guidance to staff.

Early years has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Both the indoor and outdoor learning environments are very stimulating and include a wide variety of exciting resources which are easily accessible for the children to explore and investigate. Attractive, eye-catching displays support children's learning and also celebrate their achievements. The children are very clear about the routines they have to follow. This is because the expectations of the teaching staff are high. Activities are carefully planned to ensure that they motivate both boys and girls. For example, planning a topic around the storybook 'Billy's Bucket', the children have been very engaged in 'seaside' activities. The 'beach souvenir' shop provides opportunities for them to extend their vocabulary and increase their confidence as they 'purchase' a ball, bucket and spade. Teachers quickly identify those individuals who need extra help and have a clear understanding of the next steps for each child.

Attendance was identified as an area for improvement at your previous inspection. You have taken urgent actions to address this. You know your families extremely well and work effectively with them. Pupils talk positively about the reward systems for regular attendance. For example, classes compete for the best weekly attendance because this means that they will receive one of the much-coveted teddy bears to share for a week. Pupils proudly receive badges and certificates for good attendance. The invitation to the end-of-year tea party for 100% attendance is held in very high esteem. The impact of these rewards has resulted in a strong increase in attendance since the previous inspection. Nevertheless, you are fully aware that the children's attendance in the Reception classes needs to improve further.

Governors are clear about what the school needs to do to become good and have taken a range of appropriate actions since the inspection. Documentation shows that they regularly monitor the priorities in the school improvement plan.

External support

The Endeavour Academy Trust provides effective support and challenge to the school. The chief executive officer uses her extensive knowledge and skills to hold leaders to account. You also receive a wide range of expertise from the local teaching school alliance. Regular visits and coaching for middle leaders are supporting the development of strong leadership at all levels. You and other staff take heed of the guidance. Staff value the support and advice offered, and act on it promptly. You also encourage members of staff to strengthen their knowledge by visiting other schools to learn from colleagues and share their own best practice. This includes the expertise you provide to other schools on spending pupil premium funding effectively.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bristol. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone
Her Majesty's Inspector