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Mrs Kirsty Lewis
Cherrywood Community Primary School
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Dear Mrs Lewis

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Cherrywood Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 12 July 2018, 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 governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that teachers consistently plan appropriately challenging learning activities to enable all groups of pupils, particularly the most able, to make good progress from their different starting points
- increase pupils' progress, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils, and raise achievement in reading by the end of key stage 2
- ensure that teachers' expectations are consistently high and that pupils have regular opportunities to apply their literacy, communication and mathematics skills across the wider curriculum.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders and representatives of the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school's self-evaluation and improvement plans were evaluated. Short visits were made to all classrooms jointly with senior leaders and I reviewed a sample of books from pupils in key stages 1 and 2. I met with a small group of pupils and also held conversations with a number of parents at the beginning of the school day.

Context

Nine members of staff have left the school and nine new members of staff have joined since the previous inspection in May 2017. Two members of the governing body have resigned and two new members have joined, but there are still vacancies on the governing body. You have restructured your senior leadership team which has supported you to improve teaching and learning across the school. In addition, you have refined systems to ensure that staff are more closely held to account for the progress that pupils make.

Main findings

You and your senior team have responded professionally to the outcome of the previous inspection and shown great determination and drive to improve the school. Leaders have drawn up detailed and appropriate action plans which clearly address the areas for improvement that were identified and are carrying them out carefully. These plans have clear milestones by which you can measure progress and have helped middle leaders and teachers to engage with addressing the whole-school priorities.

Restructuring your leadership team has enabled you to accelerate the pace of change in the school this year. You recognise that a greater degree of urgency is needed to ensure consistently high-quality teaching and to improve pupils' outcomes. You have been proactive, liaising with the local authority to secure a raft of bespoke support for leadership and teaching. In addition, you have appropriately broadened the network of local schools that you work with in order to moderate pupils' work. Consequently, subject leaders and teachers are gaining confidence in their use of assessment. However, there is much still to do to ensure that teachers' assessments are accurate enough to be reliable indicators of the performance of different groups of pupils in each year group.

Outcomes in early years improved this year following a dip in standards in 2017 and a higher proportion achieved a good level of development by the end of Reception Year. The effective teaching of phonics supports pupils' outcomes in phonics, from low starting points, to catch up with national averages by the end of Year 2. Provisional progress information from the national tests at the end of key stage 2

identifies that the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in writing and mathematics improved slightly in 2018. However, the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected standard in reading this year was particularly low. Priority needs to be given to improving pupils' reading skills during key stage 2.

Regular training has supported improvements to teaching and teachers are now more consistently giving pupils feedback on their work, in line with the school policy. This means that most pupils receive regular advice on how to refine and improve their work. Our visits to lessons identified that training has had an impact and some teachers' and teaching assistants' questioning skills have improved. However, the pitch of learning and use of group work do not yet consistently stretch and challenge the middle-attaining or the most able pupils. Pupils' books show that more focus needs to be given to improving pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Making use of their recent training, most learning support assistants are beginning to offer more effective levels of challenge and support in the classroom for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those who need to catch up. Leaders have recently worked with the local authority to devise suitable plans for the spending of the pupil premium to address the barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils and improve their outcomes. Senior leaders realise that staff are not yet using assessment accurately enough to make sure that teaching always meets the needs of disadvantaged pupils. Plans are in place to address this issue and rapidly diminish the differences between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in reading and mathematics.

Responding to areas for improvement identified during the last inspection, leaders have enriched and broadened the curriculum this year and enhanced provision in science and the humanities. Pupils' books demonstrate that the coverage of the national curriculum has improved. Leaders recognise that some teachers require further training to support them to improve their subject knowledge. Plans are in place to address this and support teachers to offer consistently high levels of challenge to pupils and promote literacy, communication and mathematical skills across the curriculum.

Working together with the local authority and in partnership with local schools, you ensure that subject leaders receive regular and appropriate training and support. Consequently, the leaders of English, mathematics and science are clear on their roles and the further improvements to teaching and learning that are still required in their subject areas. Leaders continue to focus on improving day-to-day teaching and are using a programme of lesson observations and reviews of pupils' work to monitor this across the school. Where weaknesses in teaching have been identified, leaders devise and offer suitable support.

This year you have appointed a new family support worker to bring about improvements to attendance and enhance the support offered to vulnerable pupils.

While overall attendance has dipped slightly and is below national figures, there has been a reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent. This has been achieved through improved liaison with families and outside agencies. Leaders have clear plans in place to improve attendance, including the frequent involvement of parents in the life of the school and effective use of the school's website. Parents told me that they appreciate the nurturing ethos of the school and the support and guidance staff willingly give to pupils. Parents told me that they particularly value how staff 'go above and beyond' and are 'amazingly patient and resilient' in order to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are engaged in school life.

Strong relationships between staff and pupils support effective learning environments in most classrooms. The atmosphere is warm and cooperative and pupils welcome visitors and are confident to explain their work. There have been a higher number of exclusions this year but leaders' analysis demonstrates the complex and multiple needs of a changing cohort of pupils. Effective behaviour policies and systems have ensured improvements to behaviour and have integrated pupils back in to the classrooms. Parents and pupils report that, although teasing and some bullying does happen, they trust staff to resolve any concerns that they may have. Pupils told me that they are proud of their school and value the friendships that they make here.

The chair of the governing body works tirelessly to support the school and recruit more governors. However, the governing body still has vacancies. The small but committed team of governors knows the context of the school and its key areas of strength and weakness well. Governors are clearly determined to support leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning and understand their role in challenging improvements. Leaders ensure that governors are informed with a wealth of information from regular assessment points throughout the year. However, governors need to have a more accurate analysis of progress. This will enable them to more effectively challenge leaders regarding the impact of their initiatives to improve the quality of teaching, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

External support

The school benefits from working with the local authority in a variety of ways. Leaders and governors draw on a range of support and training available from it and through their partnerships with other schools. In particular the local authority's support to improve assessment has started to have an impact on focusing leaders' work upon improving specific aspects of teaching and learning. Leaders and governors have drawn up plans to support teachers to improve their subject knowledge and to learn from best practice both within the school and elsewhere. English, mathematics and science leaders recognise and value the quality of the training and support that they have received and they understand the key role that they have in improving standards in their subjects. Senior leaders recognise that further work is required to ensure that improvements being made in English and mathematics and the wider curriculum are consolidated. The local authority is

committed to offering continued support to achieve this.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Newberry
Her Majesty's Inspector