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Celia Oates
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Dear Miss Oates

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to King Edward Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 13 December 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 not 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:

- supply the governing body with clear, accurate and up-to-date information about pupils' progress and attainment across different subjects, and supply good training to enable them to understand this well
- ensure that teachers consistently act on the advice and support they are given
- make sure that the level of pupils' persistent absence is reduced, especially for those who are disadvantaged.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the subject leaders for English and for mathematics, and for the coordination of provision for disadvantaged pupils. I met with representatives of the governing body. I held a meeting with the executive headteacher of the two schools with which the local authority recently brokered a formal school-to-school partnership for King Edward Primary. I held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I evaluated the leaders' improvement planning and undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work. I met with a large group of pupils and toured the school with you to see lessons taking place in different year groups. I checked that the school's records of safeguarding checks met requirements.

Context

The school's deputy headteacher is currently the acting headteacher in the absence of the substantive headteacher, who is due to begin a phased return to work shortly. The acting headteacher is also the coordinator for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). New leaders for English and for mathematics have been appointed. There is also a new coordinator for disadvantaged pupils. The coordinator for pupils' attendance is currently absent. From September this year, the school began a formal working partnership with two other local schools.

Main findings

Senior leaders have not been effective in improving the key areas of weakness identified at the last inspection in July 2017. They have been too slow to take steps to make sure that teaching is consistently good, to increase progress and to raise attainment for pupils. The current leadership team is now, belatedly, working together and sharing information and ideas in order to improve the quality of teaching.

The results of national tests and assessments in reading, writing and mathematics in the last academic year were not good enough. The proportion of pupils at the end of key stage 1 who attained the expected standard improved, particularly in writing. However, results remained below the national average in all three subjects. The proportions of disadvantaged pupils attaining the expected standard also remained below the national average and, in both reading and mathematics, were lower than those from 2017. In key stage 2, the progress of pupils in last year's Year 6 cohort fell in all three subjects. While pupils' progress was average in writing, it was below average in mathematics and well below in reading. Standards in all three subjects fell further below the national average.

Current leaders are now clear about their roles and responsibilities. They have met with their counterparts in the partnership schools and have adjusted the school's

development plan so that it is more manageable and has a sharper focus. They are evaluating the actions they are taking, and they are presenting this information to the governing body. Governors are receiving better information about the impact of actions that leaders are taking. Governors are also visiting the school to find out for themselves, as suggested in the review of governance that was undertaken soon after the inspection. Although training for the governing body to help them understand performance data is imminent, it has not yet taken place. The governing body is not yet able to hold leaders to account for the quality of education the school provides.

The effectiveness of leaders and governors has been hampered by the lack of accurate data about pupils' progress and attainment. Not all teachers are able to assess pupils' attainment accurately. This has meant that leaders have been unable to pinpoint clearly which year groups, and in which subjects, pupils are making better progress or have fallen behind. Leaders have recently introduced a new assessment system. Until this is embedded, they are moderating pupils' work themselves so that they can check the judgements that teachers are making. By the end of the spring term, leaders should be able to show governors precise data on the progress pupils have made from the end of this term. Teachers are familiar with how to use the school's assessment system to record pupils' attainment in mathematics. In October, this system was extended to include teachers' assessments in both reading and writing.

Leaders are now providing staff with better training and development opportunities to help them to perform their roles more effectively. This training is well planned. Leaders record teachers' individual strengths and weaknesses with them so that teachers know what they need to improve on and leaders can ensure that they receive guidance. For example, the leader for English has helped teachers who needed support in sequencing a series of lessons. Recent training for staff, who are keen to improve, is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching. However, leaders judge that teaching is not yet good enough in around a third of classes across key stages 1 and 2. Leaders also state that, until recently, not all staff have acted on the advice leaders have given them, and they have not been sufficiently rigorous in checking that they do so. The senior leadership team is now holding teachers to account more effectively by giving them targets for the attainment of their pupils as part of their appraisal.

Leaders have taken note of the recommendations of the review of the pupil premium. The new leader for monitoring the progress of disadvantaged pupils is evaluating the quality of provision for these pupils. She has a clear oversight of the support that these pupils are receiving and discusses this regularly with a member of the governing body, who checks that the pupil premium is being used productively. The leader has a good grasp of the support that is available for these pupils, how the impact is monitored, and how teaching can be adjusted to increase its effectiveness. She plans to review targets for disadvantaged pupils' attainment so that teachers understand fully the need for these pupils to make increased

progress. She also plans to check that all teachers are supporting these pupils effectively in class, and that no teacher assumes that disadvantaged pupils will be supported by additional intervention alone.

You are familiar with your role as the coordinator for pupils with SEND and meet regularly with the previous coordinator to monitor the provision of these pupils. You have arranged training for teaching assistants to improve the support they give to pupils with SEND, including those who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. The support that teaching assistants are giving to pupils is improving. During my visit, I saw teaching assistants providing pupils with clear guidance to help them to learn their phonics. Pupils were paying attention, and they were able to answer the questions that teaching assistants asked them to check that they understood. The governing body is also monitoring your work to secure improvements in how teaching assistants help pupils to learn.

There is evidence that teachers' planning of the curriculum is increasingly meeting the needs of pupils. Staff have, for example, provided dual language reading books to assist those who are at an early stage of learning English. Pupils told me that more of the work they receive makes them think. For instance, pupils in Year 5 showed me the different levels of challenge in the mathematics that they were working on. Pupils said that they liked more challenge, and that teachers had shown them not to pick work that was too easy, nor unduly difficult. However, there are too many classes when pupils do not consistently receive work that is matched to their ability. Some pupils of typical ability are given work that is often the same as pupils of lower ability.

Leaders have organised training from the local authority to show teachers how to teach pupils how to infer meaning from texts. As a result, most teachers are now doing this well. The most recent work from pupils in different year groups shows evidence of pupils being able to predict what will happen next in a story. Workbooks from pupils in Year 3 show that they were asked to consider why, in a story, Santa's nose went redder than usual. They were able to make sensible suggestions based on inferences in the text. Recent work in pupils' mathematics exercise books shows more evidence of teachers giving them problems to solve. However, this is not the case across all year groups. In addition, teachers are not giving pupils enough opportunities to explain their mathematical reasoning in writing.

Workbooks confirm that pupils' progress is not consistently good, and that not enough pupils are currently on track to attain the expectations for their age. Phonics teaching is improving, and teachers have visited schools in the partnership to see better teaching for themselves. However, leaders' expectations for pupils' attainment in phonics are not sufficiently high. Their targets to ensure proportions of children in Reception becoming secure at different phases of phonics teaching are too low. This risks children not making the progress they should.

Leaders have put in place a range of actions to improve pupils' attendance. Parents

are contacted immediately if they do not inform the school of a reason for their child being absent. In addition, staff have introduced a range of rewards to celebrate good attendance and to reward those who come to school every day. As a result, pupils' overall attendance has improved. It has now been sustained at broadly in line with the national average over both last year and so far this year. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent remains above the national average. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils. Too many of these pupils are missing important learning because they do not come to school as regularly as they should. This is having a negative impact on their progress.

External support

Since the last inspection, the local authority has provided extensive support to leaders. In addition to conducting the review of both the pupil premium and of governance, they are visiting the school and gathering information to write incisive reviews of the school's effectiveness. This includes the quality of teaching and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The ongoing work of the local authority is helping leaders and the governing body to see the impact of staff's work, and what needs to happen next. The local authority is committed to continuing its support until the school becomes good. The executive headteacher from the partnership school is also providing leaders with valuable coaching and advice to assist them to increase the pace of improvement. She is helping to check that leaders' and staff's actions are focused, well-timed and have the impact they should.

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

Yours sincerely

Roary Pownall

Her Majesty's Inspector