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Miss Lisa Francis
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Francis

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Leamore Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 June 2019, 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:

- provide pupils with more opportunities to apply their writing and mathematical problem-solving skills across the wider curriculum
- ensure that the governing body secures permanent leadership positions for the school in order that the school continues on its rapid improvement journey.

Evidence

During the inspection, a range of meetings were held to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Meetings took place with you, other senior leaders, pupils, members of the local governing body, the headteacher of a school that is providing

external support and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement and action plans were evaluated. Other activities undertaken included classroom visits, scrutiny of data and minutes of governing body meetings, and book scrutinies.

Context

There have been a number of significant staff changes since the last inspection, including the interim appointments of you and your senior leadership team. The chair and vice-chair of the governing body have been recently appointed.

Main findings

You, with the support of a headteacher from a local outstanding school, have been instrumental in bringing about improvements at Leamore Primary School. Your drive and determination have resulted in bringing about much-needed change. You and the leadership team have established a positive ethos where high expectations of both staff and pupils have created a culture of ambition and aspiration.

Leaders at all levels are new to their roles; however, due to external support, any gaps in their knowledge have been addressed and they now know what needs to be done further to drive up standards in their specific areas.

You and the leadership team monitor teaching and learning across school regularly and frequently evaluate the impact that this is having on standards. As a result of this swift action, any inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning have been eradicated. Where teaching has been less than effective, relevant training and support have been provided. Teachers are using assessment information effectively and the work set now challenges all pupils, especially the most able. There have been significant improvements in writing and in mathematical problem solving, which are evident in pupils' English and mathematics books. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to practise and embed these skills across the wider curriculum.

All staff have had the opportunity to work alongside staff in a local outstanding school. This has enabled them to access high-quality training, coaching and mentoring. Teachers have embraced these opportunities and, as a result, they now have the skills and knowledge to ensure they challenge their pupils effectively. There is clear evidence of rapid improvements and high expectations in pupils' workbooks.

The interim appointment of an enthusiastic and dynamic leader in early years has ensured that all children receive the best possible start in Reception. A range of assessments are used to accurately assess the children's starting points. This ensures that the correct support is put in place straight away so that children achieve their best. The confidence of the children and the way they were enthused

and able to explain their learning were a delight to observe. The learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, supports children's learning and, as a result, all children are making at least good progress. Early years is a strength of the school.

Leaders have introduced a number of highly effective strategies to try to reduce the number of pupils who are absent from school, especially disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Strategies include weekly attendance awards, rewards and the appointment of a new pastoral leader who is regularly meeting with parents and carers to discuss any concerns and provide support for families. This is starting to have a positive impact on the school and the wider community; however, leaders are aware that this is still an area that needs further work.

During the inspection, I observed a singing assembly where the pupils were signing as well as singing. All pupils were engaged and behaviour was impeccable. Behaviour during lessons and unstructured times was excellent. Pupils demonstrated positive learning attitudes and were keen to talk about their learning as well as being able to articulate what they were learning. Children spoken to stated how school had improved and one pupil described it as 'magical'.

The newly formed local governing body has the knowledge and skills that are needed to support and effectively challenge the school to ensure that the rapid improvements continue. Governors have undertaken numerous visits and state that they have already seen improvements in data, the learning environment and pupils' behaviour. Reports presented to governors are now comprehensive and, as a result, governors are able to provide appropriate challenge. The interim appointments of you and your senior leadership team have significantly strengthened the school. However, governors are aware that the school will remain vulnerable until permanent appointments to these leadership posts are secured.

External support

Since the section 5 inspection, King's Hill Primary School has provided effective support in mathematics, English and leadership and management.

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

Yours sincerely

Kate Brunt
Ofsted Inspector