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Mrs Maureen Andrews
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Andrews

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Pye Bank CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 21 May 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:

- improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4, in order to increase pupils' attainment and progress in these year groups
- ensure that the improved professional development and sharper monitoring and evaluation by senior and middle leaders leads to more rapid progress by pupils and higher attainment at the end of key stage 2.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, and an external consultant to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also spoke to parents bringing their children to school. I evaluated the school improvement plan. Observations of teaching took place with the head and deputy headteacher. Samples of pupils' work were discussed with middle and senior leaders. Records of leaders' monitoring activities and the impact on staff development and pupil progress were considered.

Context

Since the last section 5 inspection, the interim deputy and assistant headteachers have been made permanent. Two teachers have been appointed to lead English. The mathematics leader has been promoted to assistant headteacher. One teacher left and two teachers have been appointed for September 2018. The school continues to have high pupil mobility, including new arrivals to Britain who are new to English.

Main findings

You and the governing body have strengthened senior and middle leadership. You have dealt with underperformance of staff effectively. Senior teachers are playing a valuable role in coaching and mentoring others to improve their teaching. This has extended the range of teaching strategies being used, supported the implementation of new approaches and is improving the consistency of teaching and learning.

Governors' knowledgeable and effective support has helped to bring about changes in school culture and performance. The external review of governance initiated by the governing body has improved the reporting structure and the training of governors. The governing body is outward looking and has a strategic vision for the future development of the school.

The review of pupil premium funding has helped you strengthen the quality and consistency of teaching. The actions you have taken are beginning to have a positive impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who speak English as an additional language. Attendance by disadvantaged pupils was higher than the national average for all pupils in 2017. You have identified that some Roma pupils have a high level of persistent absence because they return to Slovakia during the summer term. You are working with parents to encourage these pupils to stay at school.

Your procedures for analysing data, observing teaching and reviewing the evidence of pupils' learning are more coherent and sharply focused. As a result, senior and middle leaders have a detailed understanding of pupils' progress. You have gathered secure evidence of the impact of teaching and staff development on pupils' learning.

You have developed a precise view of each teacher's development and you regularly identify the next steps to improve the teaching and learning in each class.

Improved teaching is leading to improved attainment and progress at key stages 1 and 2. However, progress in Year 3 and Year 4 is not as rapid due to inconsistency in the quality of teaching and discontinuity in teaching staff.

The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the early years foundation stage, in 2017, was in line with the national average, as in previous years. In 2017, outcomes at the end of key stage 1 increased. They were above the national average in writing and mathematics and average in reading. At the end of key stage 2, in 2017, attainment increased but was well below average in reading and mathematics. The progress Year 6 pupils made from key stage 1, in reading and mathematics, remained weak. School information shows that current pupils are making better progress. However, a quarter of pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not making enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

You are identifying the needs of individual pupils and the barriers to their learning more accurately. Meetings to review pupil progress now include the inclusion leader who is responsible for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils who are new to English. Sharper assessment is leading staff to target pupils' needs more accurately and promptly. Formal support plans for individual pupils have led to actions that have improved their learning and behaviour. More accurately targeted teaching of new arrivals is helping them to progress well through the early stages of learning English.

Following a decline in phonics outcomes in recent years, you have made the teaching of phonics more structured and systematic in the early years and key stage 1. Regular reviews of pupils' progress lead to quicker additional support for those who fall behind. As result, the proportion reaching the required standard in phonics has increased this year but remains below average. Teachers use choral repetition well for pupils to learn and practise letters and sounds. On occasion, teachers miss opportunities to explain the meaning of words.

A new scheme of work is helping pupils to develop their reading comprehension skills, including retrieving information and inferring meaning. However, inference remains a weaker skill. Teachers have adopted a more focused and explicit approach to teaching vocabulary. Pupils enjoy learning new words and are keen to use them in their speaking and their writing. Pupils' books show that they are applying new words correctly in their written work.

New English leaders have established a systematic approach to promoting reading for pleasure. More pupils are borrowing books from the school library. Teachers are

monitoring pupils' reading at home more consistently. Additional assessments check that pupils are improving their reading skills.

A new spelling scheme is promoting correct spelling. Pupils are showing increased accuracy in regular spelling tests and in their writing. Senior leaders check the accuracy of assessment of writing with other schools in the locality.

The mathematics leader's thoughtful application of external guidance has strengthened the approach to teaching fluency, reasoning and problem solving. Clear structures and sequences for learning mathematical skills are creating greater consistency in teaching and learning. This is enabling pupils to acquire, and practise, essential skills and to develop better understanding of mathematical concepts and language.

External support

A visit to an outstanding school and the pupil premium review have been instructive in helping leaders to set higher expectations and provide firmer direction for the teaching and assessment of reading, writing and mathematics. An external consultant has provided helpful guidance for English teaching and for the development of middle leaders. Local authority monitoring and members of the governing body provide constructive support and feedback for school improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell

Her Majesty's Inspector