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19 May 2017

Mrs Mitchell
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Mitchell

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Cliff Park Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 4 May 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that leaders' checks on teaching make more explicit the link between pupils' progress and effective teaching and use this to exemplify best practice
- match more closely the spending for disadvantaged pupils to the barriers for learning which the school has identified for these pupils
- gather pupils' perceptions of behaviour and attitudes to learning and involve them in identifying how further improvements can be made.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with senior leaders, the chair of the governing body and the executive headteacher/CEO of the academy trust to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection. The school improvement and action plans were evaluated. Teaching in all classes was observed jointly with senior leaders. Pupil assessment information, pupils' books and monitoring records were scrutinised.

Context

Since the previous inspection there have been a number of staffing changes. Three teachers have left the school and have been replaced. Three teachers are currently absent on maternity leave or through illness. These vacancies have been filled, one by a temporary teacher.

The school has been identified by the Department for Education as a coasting school and submitted its plans for improvement accordingly.

Main findings

Leaders have accepted and acted with vigour on the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. They have revisited the school's aims and values to ensure that staff have a better understanding of what is expected of them. This has helped to establish a greater collective commitment to improvement and staff morale is now strong. Newly appointed staff are provided with a detailed induction so that they straightaway know what leaders expect. As a result, those staff who have recently joined the school are making a positive contribution to improving pupils' progress.

Leaders now have a more accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning than at the time of the previous inspection. They have drawn up and are implementing appropriate plans which identify where improvements are needed and how these will be secured. This is beginning to have a positive impact on improving teaching. Leaders are more rigorous in their checks on teaching and learning. They provide clear feedback to teachers about their strengths and areas for improvement. However, leaders have yet to ensure that they focus these checks closely enough on the progress that pupils are making, and how teachers are enabling or impeding pupils in making progress towards expected standards and beyond.

Governors visit regularly and are now more focused on the progress of pupils across the school. They have reviewed their skills to ensure that they match their responsibilities. They have strengthened the cross-school working of the governing body, which had only been recently amalgamated at the time of the previous inspection. As a result, governors have more confidence in what they are doing and

are holding leaders more closely to account. Governors check the information they are provided with against different sources of information. For example, they compare information about the quality of teaching and learning with pupils' outcomes in different classes and year groups to check if they are receiving a consistent picture. They have ensured that leaders provide more detailed information about spending on disadvantaged pupils and its impact so that they can account for this spending more effectively. However, they accept that due to changes in staffing, current plans for pupil premium funding are not sufficiently well matched to the barriers to learning identified by the school.

Teaching is improving because support for teachers has been well planned and provided as appropriate. Additional leadership capacity has been created both from the partner infant school and from an external consultant. This has meant that support for staff is better tailored towards individual needs and consequently teachers say that they are being well supported. As a result, teaching is improving and leaders were able to point clearly to examples where this is evident.

Teaching in Year 6 continues to be a major strength of the school, despite some staff changes that have taken place. As one pupil told me during the inspection 'Teaching in Year 6 is exemplary. Teachers really could not do more to help us.'

Despite the improvements, leaders acknowledge that teaching in some classes is not consistently good. For example, in some classes teachers still do not move learning on as rapidly as they should and so time is wasted.

Teachers are using assessment more effectively because leaders have held staff meetings to establish a better and more consistent understanding of what is expected in each year group. Teachers now are more confident in assessing pupils' progress and using this to plan their lessons. A new system 'pick and fix' has been introduced. Teachers identify during lessons where pupils have problems and put in place rapid intervention to address these, often within the same day.

These improvements in teaching are having a positive impact on accelerating the progress of pupils. This is confirmed by the school's assessment information and work seen in pupils' books.

Leaders have ensured that the system for promoting good behaviour is now firmly embedded. Pupils know the system and say that it has had some impact on improving behaviour around the school. Visits to classes and scrutiny of records of behavioural incidents demonstrate that this is the case. Nevertheless, some pupils say that their learning is still sometimes disrupted by pupils who do not listen when they should do. Leaders recognise that because teaching is not yet consistently good, in some classes pupils lose interest and so sometimes do not concentrate on their work.

Leaders have continued to ensure that pupils are kept safe at the school and that safeguarding is embedded throughout the work of the school. Leaders identified that online safety was an area that needed further attention with pupils and has provided greater input. They planned an information session for parents but this was poorly attended. They recognise that this needs to be revisited so that parents and the school can work more effectively to ensure that pupils are aware of what they should and should not do to keep themselves safe online.

External support

Trustees have committed to improving the school by providing additional support for leaders. This has come in the form of consultant support, support from external providers of training and by ensuring that the two schools within the trust work more effectively together. Trustees are considering the future of the trust to ensure that both schools within it are well supported in the long term.

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

Yours sincerely

Maria Curry
Her Majesty's Inspector