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Lynn Lowe
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Dear Mrs Lowe

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Newtons Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 20 April 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 June 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in June 2016, the school was also judged to require improvement.

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

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. We observed learning in classrooms together and I scrutinised a sample of pupils' books. I met with teaching staff who were new to the school this year to discuss the school's work to keep pupils safe. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and reviewed the 29 responses to the online questionnaire. The school's website was reviewed to make sure it is compliant with current requirements. Records relating to the safe recruitment of new staff were reviewed.

Context

Since the previous inspection, you have successfully recruited permanent teachers and leaders to replace agency staff. The school is currently in consultation with a school in Barking and Dagenham with a view to forming a federation. The local authority has supported the school in this process. If both governing bodies agree to a federation, this arrangement will commence in June 2017.

Main findings

You, senior leaders and governors have been effective in securing improvements to teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection. You have identified the right priorities to move the school forward. The school action plan is fit for purpose. You agree that evaluating the impact of actions taken to accelerate pupils' progress on a more regular basis would be helpful to inform your ongoing self-evaluation.

The quality of teaching has been enhanced through the appointment of new permanent staff and through the deployment of the deputy headteacher to improve outcomes in Year 6. New teachers to the school are having a good impact on pupils' progress, as are the more established staff who are working hard to constantly improve their skills. Leaders have ensured that teachers and teaching assistants provide a strong climate for learning across the school and are motivating pupils to be successful learners.

Pupils have a positive attitude to their learning. During the inspection, pupils in all classrooms were happily engaged with learning and working hard. Pupils are proud to talk about their work and their school. They are friendly, polite and welcoming.

Books indicate that pupils in Year 6 are making strong progress this year. The most able in this year group are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders recognise that the most able pupils in other year groups are not consistently given work that challenges them to achieve the standards of which they are capable.

Leaders have ensured that the quality of writing is improving. In Years 2 and 6, books show that most pupils are making good progress in writing. Leaders plan to share the good practice exemplified by mathematics leaders to support the professional development of staff. By doing this they plan to ensure consistently good progress in mathematics across the school. Leaders and governors have ensured that developing pupils' love of reading is high on the agenda. The new library is beginning to enhance pupils' engagement and enjoyment of reading.

Governors know the school well. They are accurate and honest in their understanding of the barriers to becoming a good school. They have risen to the challenge of working with the local authority to secure a federation with a good

school. Governors do not shy away from difficult decisions and are very aware of the need to improve the school rapidly. Governors responded swiftly and efficiently to the outcomes of an external review. Since the previous inspection, they have ensured that the website meets current requirements with regard to what should be published. Together with leaders, they have made sure that records relating to safeguarding are thorough and up to date.

The external review of the school's review of pupil premium funding served to validate senior leaders' own internal evaluation of the spending. It also further supported governors in their analysis of the spending and in honing their suggested plans for future spending.

Differences between the achievement of the disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are beginning to diminish, particularly in Year 6. Leaders are further reviewing their assessment system to reflect the good practice seen in the school with which they are federating. They believe that this will help them to be more accurate in the tracking of the progress that all pupils make, including those who are disadvantaged. Leaders understand the urgency of ensuring that any changes they make to their system must be embedded swiftly and must ensure consistency and accuracy across all year groups.

The family support worker is relentless in her drive to support families to improve attendance. She has detailed knowledge of individual families. She undertakes home visits to support vulnerable families in ensuring children come to school. To further improve attendance, leaders have introduced a range of rewards and actions, which are showing early signs of impact. Despite this, attendance remains below the national average. Leaders adopt a supportive, rather than punitive, role in trying to improve attendance, as their priority is to maintain positive relationships with the community they serve.

External support

Leaders and governors are in consultation regarding a federation with a school in Barking and Dagenham which may commence in June 2017. The local authority has supported the school well and has helped to facilitate this partnership. The local authority has helped the school to fine-tune its self-evaluation through the recent reviews they have undertaken. The relationship between the local authority and senior leaders is positive and supportive.

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

Yours sincerely

Ruth Dollner
Her Majesty's Inspector