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4 December 2018

Mrs Charlotte Summers
Headteacher
Grange Primary
Bainbridge Green
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Dear Mrs Summers

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Grange Primary

Following my visit to your school on 22 November 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, governors and the recently appointed interim multi-academy trust 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, a representative of the local governing body, the interim chief executive officer (CEO) representing the Shrewsbury Academy Trust and a group of Year 6 pupils to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I considered the school's self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan. I read the outcomes of staff monitoring, your recent reports to governors and minutes of local governing body meetings. I also informally observed lessons.

Context

In May this year, the regional schools commissioner appointed an interim board of trustees, together with an interim CEO and chief financial officer. In September 2017, an assistant headteacher was appointed.

Main findings

Since the section 5 inspection, you have continued to drive school improvement with determination, ambition and clarity. You focus sharply on refining the quality of teaching and learning to advance pupils' rates of progress and move them closer to attaining age-related standards. You have successfully drawn on available expertise and you are in the process of developing a strong and united senior leadership team to drive continued improvement.

You provided ongoing support and training for all staff. In addition, as staff confidence grew, you encouraged their emerging strengths so they could share their expertise more widely. Staff frequently observe each other and provide evaluative feedback, including identifying what the observer will adopt in their own practice. Teaching assistants often work together in pairs to develop their skills or consider the effectiveness of interventions. 'Hot spot' teachers provide advice for others so that individuals are less dependent on subject leaders but keep the momentum of improvement moving forward.

Teachers challenge pupils effectively and appropriately because they keep a close eye on individual pupils' understanding. They check pupils' work during lessons so that misconceptions are quickly addressed or relevant challenge is introduced. Carefully planned tasks for pupils incrementally build on prior learning and successfully prepare pupils for more complex concepts or problem-solving. Teachers ensure that learning is purposeful, well organised and appropriately resourced. Consequently, pupils concentrate, persevere and celebrate their success.

The recently introduced curriculum fully engages pupils in their learning. Planned experiences and visitors inspire pupils' interest. Pupils take a pride in their work, and they practise their handwriting so that the quality of their presentation continues to improve. Staff seize opportunities for pupils to apply learned skills in writing or mathematics to a range of subjects. Teachers' plans clearly identify where these skills can be implemented, for example requiring pupils to write an account of the digestive system in science lessons.

You drew on available expertise from other schools and the local authority to improve teachers' subject knowledge and raise their expectations of pupils. Staff have readily taken on board the skills, practices and methods they learned. All staff now fully contribute to the identification of ongoing improvements. There is no hint of complacency.

You continue to support and develop middle leaders. They take on their responsibilities with pride and act on specific targets identified as the school's current improvement priorities. Where appropriate, they are given time to take part in networking events to learn from others or share their growing expertise.

You introduced a new assessment system in September which has sharpened staff's accuracy, expectations and ability to plan the next learning steps. Rates of pupils' progress have improved, and staff are more able to identify barriers to pupils' learning and provide the necessary support. Staff are currently becoming more aware of the requirements of the higher standards and those of greater depth. Leaders and teachers have regular meetings to analyse pupils' progress and quickly identify pupils who are in danger of falling behind.

The school improvement plan provides a clear structure for the overarching aims, expected outcomes, necessary actions and timescales. The aims and actions are relevant and reflect the school's current priorities for further improvement. All planned actions closely correlate with your self-evaluations and monitoring evidence. In addition, they take account of the findings and recommendations from recent external reviews. Those staff responsible for leading aspects of the improvement plan are clearly identified and accountable for the success of each initiative. Staff frequently evaluate the success or any difficulties in meeting the improvement targets and plan amendments accordingly. Your clear expectations of all staff are communicated explicitly in school policies. You frequently check that these policies are implemented consistently by all staff across the school.

You have appropriately targeted initiatives to ensure that the large proportion of disadvantaged pupils meet the standards expected for their age. These initiatives were particularly successful in key stage 2, where the proportion of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standards in 2018 was more than double that of the previous year.

An external review of governance was conducted in April 2017 and a further review is planned for spring next year. Governors are appropriately skilled and knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities. They have a range of relevant expertise, which means they are confident in challenging and seeking evidence for themselves. Governors independently analyse assessment information and track pupils' progress carefully to evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives. In addition, governors hold leaders and staff to account for the rates of pupils' progress.

A review of the school's use of the pupil premium was undertaken in April 2017. The review helped to raise leaders' and staff's awareness of the complex range of issues which affect disadvantaged pupils' progress. Staff revised their systems of initial assessments of pupils and considered how best to secure their inclusion and well-being. Leaders have involved parents and carers in supporting their children at home and keeping track of how well they are doing in school. You have successfully

reduced the differences in rates of progress and outcomes between the disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

External support

In the past, you purchased the necessary training from the local authority. As a result, staff demonstrate secure subject knowledge. You also accessed training for safeguarding and improving early years outdoor learning. The recently appointed interim board of trustees and the CEO have a good understanding of the school and how the trust can facilitate further developments.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Shropshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway
Her Majesty's Inspector