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Mrs Jayne Elliott
Acting Headteacher
Crigglestone Mackie Hill Junior and Infant School
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Dear Mrs Elliott

Special measures monitoring inspection of Crigglestone Mackie Hill Junior and Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 11 to 12 December 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in December 2017.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Wakefield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Karine Hendley

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in December 2017.

- Urgently improve teaching in key stages 1 and 2 so that it is consistently good over time by ensuring that:
 - teachers are equipped with strong subject knowledge that will support them in delivering high-quality learning
 - questioning is used well to check on learning so that tasks can be reshaped when pupils have not fully understood the concepts being taught
 - all staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - work set is appropriately challenging for all pupils, but particularly for middle-prior-attaining pupils and the least able
 - additional adults are well directed to have the maximum impact on pupils' learning.
- Rapidly improve outcomes for all groups of pupils to make sure that they are at least good by:
 - accelerating pupils' progress and diminishing differences in attainment between all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, and other pupils nationally
 - using assessment information to match learning appropriately to meet the needs of pupils from their different starting points
 - ensuring that pupils have frequent opportunities to develop and deepen their skills in reading and writing in a range of subjects and genres
 - making sure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop mathematical reasoning, applying their knowledge independently so they can achieve greater depth in learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels by ensuring that:
 - senior and middle leaders rigorously monitor provision in their areas of responsibility and secure essential improvements in teaching
 - governors hold leaders rigorously to account for pupils' progress
 - the learning and progress of all pupils are carefully tracked so that those who are at risk of falling behind are identified quickly and given the help they need to achieve well
 - staff consistently apply positive behaviour strategies to support pupils in maintaining consistently good social and learning behaviours
 - support is given to pupils and parents to reduce persistent absence.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 11 December 2018 to 12 December 2018

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the acting executive headteacher, senior and middle leaders, a local authority representative and members of the governing body and the strategic improvement committee (SIC). The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plans were evaluated.

Alongside leaders, I observed pupils' learning in parts of lessons and looked in their books. I spoke to pupils about their learning and observed their behaviour at playtimes and around the school. I also met with parents at the start of the school day and considered the 120 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

I studied the school's documents relating to safeguarding, evaluations of the quality of teaching and minutes from governing body and SIC meetings. I also evaluated information relating to pupils' outcomes, behaviour and attendance.

Context

Following the last inspection, the headteacher left the school. Since January 2018, an acting headteacher has been in post. She has been seconded from her post as deputy headteacher of a local primary school. Initially, her role as acting headteacher was on a part-time basis. This was increased to a full-time post from April 2018. The headteacher of the local secondary school has been appointed to a newly created position of acting executive headteacher, also since January 2018.

Since the last inspection, two teachers have left the school, along with a number of support staff. At the start of 2018, a number of different supply teachers were working in the school, covering vacancies and teachers absent long-term. However, the school is currently fully staffed with permanent employees.

There have been changes to the membership of the governing body, including the appointment of a new chair of governors. The SIC has been introduced and is chaired by a national leader of governance who had not previously worked with the school.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The acting headteacher has brought much needed stability to the school following a period of staffing turbulence. She has begun to create a culture of raised expectations in relation to pupils' achievements. The unwavering positivity and

determination, shown by the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher, have been crucial in gaining the support of staff, parents and carers. The measured, yet tenacious, approach from senior leaders has been successful in securing some rapid improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

The improvements now evident in the school are the result of a coordinated approach with a number of different contributors. The local authority acted swiftly, following the last inspection, to secure the highly skilled leadership of the acting headteacher and acting executive headteacher. Support from the local authority over the last year has been of high quality and has shown high intensity. This has been vital in enabling leaders to improve the effectiveness of teaching.

Leaders have engaged with local schools and with external consultants to provide essential professional development for teachers and learning support assistants. As a result of this training, members of staff now have suitable subject knowledge in English grammar, punctuation and spelling and in mathematics. Leaders have also introduced clear expectations of staff linked to planning, marking and feedback. Leaders check, frequently, that members of staff are adhering to these raised expectations and that they are using their enhanced subject knowledge effectively in teaching. These strategies have been successful in improving the quality of teaching in most year groups.

The acting executive headteacher has played a pivotal role in improving pupils' behaviour and in developing the school's approach to behaviour management. He has been instrumental in developing a close relationship between the school and the local secondary school. As such, senior leaders from the secondary school have supported improvements in the quality of teaching. A team of specialist teachers from the secondary school has been involved in planning and teaching wider curriculum subjects alongside teachers on a weekly basis. As well as providing high-quality teaching for pupils, this has been effective in developing the knowledge and expertise of the primary teachers in a number of subjects.

The effectiveness of governors has been strengthened through the introduction of the SIC. The chair of the SIC has brought additional expertise to the school. With the support of the committee members, he has ensured that leaders are held to account for tackling the areas of improvement identified at the last inspection. Members of the governing body feel that they are able to take a more active role in the strategic leadership of the school, having seen this modelled by the chair of the SIC. Governors now receive appropriately detailed information from senior leaders in relation to pupils' outcomes, attendance and behaviour. The acting headteacher also provides regular evaluations of the quality of teaching. Governors are astute in validating these judgements using reports from external partners.

Governors have commissioned an external review of governance, which has been completed in a timely fashion. This confirmed the improvements, evident in the effectiveness of governors, and made recommendations to further strengthen this.

Governors acknowledge that they have not moved forward with some of the recommendations as quickly as they desired. Their progress has been slowed by uncertainties around the school's academisation and associated uncertainty about the future of governance arrangements. This lack of clarity has also contributed to the governors' delay in securing a substantive senior leadership team.

Many middle leaders are new to their role. They show enthusiasm and have strong subject knowledge in their areas of responsibility. They have accessed external support, which has enabled them to identify appropriate priorities and to formulate detailed action plans. However, because they are new to role, they are not able to demonstrate their impact on the quality of teaching or on pupils' outcomes. Consequently, improvements to these aspects are currently heavily reliant on the work of senior leaders and external support.

Leaders have redesigned their approach to delivering the national curriculum. They have introduced topics for each term or half-term and have formed pertinent links between subjects. This has been very well received by pupils, parents and staff alike. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced and that it provides frequent opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills. Leaders acknowledge that there is more work to do to improve teachers' subject knowledge in some wider curriculum areas. They agree that some pupils, particularly the most able, do not receive a suitable level of challenge in a range of subjects.

The deputy headteacher has ensured that disadvantaged pupils are a key focus for members of staff. The findings from the external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding has been important in guiding her work. She has ensured that disadvantaged pupils' progress, attainment and attendance are tracked carefully and regularly. She has an in-depth knowledge of the disadvantaged pupils in the school, of their barriers to learning and of their families. Funding is now targeted for individual pupils. It is often used for additional teaching to support learning or for breakfast club provision to improve pupils' attendance. Leaders check frequently on the difference they are making to disadvantaged pupils. However, leaders acknowledge that disadvantaged pupils are rarely making the accelerated progress they need to catch up with other pupils nationally. They agree that there is more work to be done. They recognise the need to raise teachers' expectations regarding disadvantaged pupils' achievement so that more pupils can reach the higher standards of learning. Leaders also identify that the low attendance of some disadvantaged pupils continues to hinder their learning.

Despite the school's current position, staff are very positive in their approach. They appreciate the professional development opportunities they have been given and feel valued by senior leaders. Similarly, parents who expressed their views during the inspection were overwhelmingly supportive of the current leadership arrangements. They feel, very strongly, that improvements have been rapid and have welcomed the opportunities they now have to be involved in the school. Their positivity is reflected by the parents who have shared their opinions through

Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved significantly in most year groups and subjects. However, leaders acknowledge that there is more work to do before teaching is consistently good and all weaknesses are eradicated.

Leaders have had significant success in improving the teaching of writing. Since the last inspection, teachers and learning support assistants have developed their knowledge of English grammar, punctuation and spelling. They have a much clearer understanding of pupils' starting points and of the writing standards expected for their year groups. Teachers ensure that pupils have frequent opportunities to practise their skills by writing at length in a range of genres in different subjects. Pupils are enthused by writing in relation to their topics and, in many year groups, they are highly motivated to write. As a result of this new approach, pupils are starting to make better progress in writing.

Pupils are developing a love of reading. Leaders have employed a number of strategies to foster this. For example, they have introduced reading areas to classrooms, as well as redesigning the school library and stocking it with new books. Reading comprehension skills are now taught on a weekly basis. This is at the early stages of implementation. Therefore, teachers are not consistent in ensuring that their questioning presents pupils with an appropriate level of challenge.

Lower-attaining pupils are not always supported well to develop their early reading skills. Teachers do not have systems in place to gather detailed information about pupils' phonics knowledge. As a result, the books they give to pupils to practise their reading contain sounds that pupils do not yet know and words for which sounding out is not possible. This leads to pupils' frustration and they often resort to trying to guess words using the pictures. Additionally, this group of pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their reading by doing so with an adult. Leaders have plans in place to improve this aspect of teaching.

Teachers have developed their subject knowledge in mathematics and are beginning to develop pupils' number and fluency skills to an age-appropriate level. Leaders have ensured that pupils now have frequent opportunities to solve problems and develop their reasoning skills in mathematics. However, activities relating to these aspects of mathematics do not provide pupils with appropriate challenge in all year groups. Teachers do not consistently recognise where pupils are finding work too easy. In addition, their use of questioning to move learning on is variable. Consequently, pupils do not develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills as rapidly as they could.

Learning support assistants have received regular training, which has improved their

subject knowledge. They also have access to resources which help them to understand the expectations for pupils' attainment in each year group. As a result of these strategies, learning assistants often intervene effectively in pupils' learning to address misconceptions and promote participation. Leaders have ensured that learning support assistants, who provide additional teaching sessions, are well trained to do so. As a result, targeted pupils with gaps in their learning benefit from these small group sessions.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Leaders have introduced systems to track pupils' attendance. They use these systems to identify 'target' pupils and act to tackle very low attendance. They have been successful in improving the attendance rates of some pupils, for example, through offering pupils a place at breakfast club. Pupils are also keen to gain certificates and prizes offered as incentives for good attendance. However, leaders do not intervene early enough when pupils' attendance starts to fall. As a result, attendance rates have fallen since this time last year and the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent has risen. Disadvantaged pupils have particularly high rates of absence. Although leaders recognise these trends, they have not been successful in reversing them.

Leaders have worked tirelessly to improve pupils' behaviour. They have revised the school's approach to behaviour management. Through this, they have introduced higher expectations of pupils' conduct and their attitudes to learning. This has led to a reduction in behavioural incidents. Training for members of staff, delivered by specialists, has ensured that pupils' conduct around school is generally calm and orderly. Pupils are well mannered, holding doors open for others and saying 'please' and 'thank you' as a matter of routine. However, pupils can be lively and noisy as they move around the school when members of staff are not clear about their expectations.

On the whole, in lessons, pupils show positive attitudes to learning. However, when activities do not meet their needs, pupils become off-task and chat to their peers instead of concentrating on their work. Pupils themselves confirmed this variability in their behaviour. Those spoken to during the inspection hold the view that pupils change their behaviour depending on which member of staff is in charge. They expressed frustration at sometimes not being able to do their work because other pupils were being disruptive. They felt that their concerns were not listened to or acted on consistently by all adults.

Leaders have ensured that the emotional support they provide for vulnerable pupils and their families is highly effective. Strong relationships exist between families and staff with designated responsibility for child protection. Leaders employ therapists and mental health specialists to support when pupils' emotional or behavioural difficulties are a barrier to their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Over time, pupils' outcomes in English and mathematics have represented considerable underachievement. Due to improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over the last year, pupils have started to make better progress. Consequently, more pupils are reaching the standards expected for their age. However, very few pupils are making the strong and sustained progress to reach the higher standards of learning.

Despite improvements to the leadership of provision for disadvantaged pupils, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who reach the standards expected for their age is low in most year groups. They are not making the enhanced progress they need to catch up with other pupils nationally. Instances of disadvantaged pupils reaching the higher standards of learning are very rare.

The acting headteacher has introduced a clear system which enables leaders and teachers to track pupils' progress and attainment. She has introduced rigorous moderation of the judgements teachers make. This involves external partners checking on the accuracy of teachers' assessments. As a result, teachers have an increasingly accurate understanding of pupils' starting points.

Leaders and teachers now identify pupils who are not making sufficient progress and those who are falling behind. The acting headteacher has introduced regular meetings where teachers are held to account for the progress pupils make. These meetings also serve as the vehicle to identify pupils' barriers to learning, as well as strategies to support pupils to overcome these barriers.

External support

Concerted and sustained support from a range of external bodies has played a significant role in the improvements seen in the school's effectiveness. The local authority and external consultants have been instrumental in providing professional development for leaders and staff. The Kettlethorpe Collaborative Partnership (a group of local schools) has provided high-quality support, which has been effective in improving the quality of teaching and assessment in a number of year groups.