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Christine Hall
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hall

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Broadfield Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 26 June 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 November 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- support teachers to develop greater confidence in teaching reading effectively to pupils across the school
- make sure that teachers use assessment more precisely to identify and support pupils who need to make more rapid progress
- ensure that leaders develop greater rigour in their monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, so that they know the impact that their actions are having on the progress of pupils.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the acting deputy headteacher, leaders responsible for reading and writing and a group of parents. I also met with the chair of the governing body and six other governors. I spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority. During the day, I visited a number of classes to observe pupils at work, scrutinise their reading and look at their books. I met formally two key stage 2 pupils to discuss reading and their work. I evaluated your action plan and considered other evidence, including your updated self-evaluation, the most recent pupil performance information and safeguarding documents and policies.

Context

A number of leaders and teachers have left the school since the previous inspection, or are leaving at the end of the academic year. There are also two other staff on long-term leave. In September 2017, you will be leaving the school and a new interim headteacher will be in post.

The school is currently in the process of joining the Aspire Academy Trust to become an academy in September 2017.

You have employed a new leader for the early years, who started in April 2017. A new special educational needs coordinator is due to start in September 2017. In the interim, you are responsible for leading special educational needs, alongside your daily duties.

Main findings

There have been significant turbulence and upheaval in leadership and staffing since the previous inspection in November 2016. Despite support from the trust, you have faced challenges in recruiting staff to the school. A lack of consistent leadership, and subsequently leadership capacity, has made it difficult to act on the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. Leaders' actions either have been lacking in depth or are not well enough embedded. Leaders have been unable to bring about sustained and significant improvements towards ensuring that the school becomes securely good.

Leaders and governors have not acted to ensure that staff understand the direction for the school. Distractions have diverted the emphasis away from aspects of school improvement that required immediate attention following the previous inspection. You have worked hard to ensure that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis, given the high staff turnover and amount of change, while governors have focused on ensuring that there is a smooth transition during the academy conversion. However, in the meantime, a leadership vacuum has emerged in the strategic direction of the school. Staff, including subject leaders, have not been

given clear direction about their roles or the expectations that leaders have of them. Too often, staff are working diligently but without clear purpose with regard to the impact that they are having.

Leaders have not communicated their expectations of the teaching and assessment of reading clearly or precisely enough. This is because teachers' approach to the teaching of reading is inconsistent. In some classes, there is a significant lack of evidence on which teachers are basing their assessments. Leaders are unable to verify that the progress that teachers report to them is accurate. Teachers are working hard doing what they think is right, with little guidance about how to improve. The system of recording evidence of pupils' progress in reading differs across classes and is non-existent in some. As a result, the actions taken by leaders and staff to improve reading are not making enough of a difference.

Senior leaders' evaluations of work to improve the school are not effective. Leaders', including subject leaders', focus has been on attainment. Currently, they do not check precisely enough whether pupils are making sufficient progress from their individual starting points. Leaders' checks on teaching focus too much on what teachers are doing and not enough on the difference being made to pupils' progress. Leaders do not know the difference that they are making to groups of pupils for whom they receive additional funding, such as disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders do not have evidence to verify that they know securely enough whether they are making a difference to all pupils' achievement.

You have put in place support for teachers, where needed, to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and appropriate training is taking place to help teachers to develop their knowledge and understanding. For example, you have restructured staff meetings so that a proportion of the time is now dedicated to staff training. The introduction of 'SEN pods' gives your staff the opportunity to discuss areas that leaders are focusing on to improve the provision for pupils. You report that, for some of your teaching staff, this support and training is making a positive difference to their confidence and ensuring that they are more accountable for the progress of all pupils in their classes.

Records relating to safeguarding have been maintained since they were checked at the previous inspection. You, together with the school's family support worker, make sure that information relating to concerns about pupils is kept in chronological order with details of the actions taken by school staff. You and the governors have ensured that agreed policies are up to date and adhered to consistently, particularly with regards to behaviour, safeguarding children and pupils and responding to parental concerns. After the previous inspection, you were asked to improve communication with parents. During a meeting with a group of parents, they confirmed that you and the staff communicate effectively, investigate any issues thoroughly and support families appropriately when needed.

External support

Since the previous inspection, you and the school have received support from the local authority. You report that it has been effective supporting the work that leaders do with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, this support has not always been well targeted to the specific areas in the previous inspection. Although the local authority has supported staff to undertake further work to increase pupils' reading fluency and comprehension skills, this is not yet supporting leaders to identify effective strategies to move the school forwards against the numerous priorities identified in November 2016.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 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 Hertfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tracy Fielding

Her Majesty's Inspector