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Mrs Pamela Hayes
Principal
Henley-In-Arden CofE Primary School
Arden Road
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Dear Mrs Hayes

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Henley-In-Arden CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 13 October 2016, 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 that took place in February 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are 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:

- make sure that senior leaders identify the exact actions individual teachers need to take to help pupils make even faster progress in English and mathematics
- share the existing effective practice within the school so that all teachers give pupils the chance to extend their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics
- ensure that staff consistently follow the school policy when planning writing activities and marking pupils' writing
- make sure that the school website contains the most up-to-date information.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and the chair of the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met with the headteacher of Knowle Primary Academy, who is the new school improvement partner for Henley-In-Arden Primary School. We discussed the support that senior leaders from Knowle are providing for staff at Henley. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed, including the latest information about pupils' achievement, senior leaders' notes of visits to lessons and reviews of pupils' work. You joined me on brief visits to all classes in key stages 1 and 2. We reviewed examples of pupils' work and we talked to pupils about their learning.

Main findings

With highly effective support from the headteacher and senior leaders from Knowle Primary Academy, you and the staff have taken suitable action in response to the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection in February 2016. Although teaching is improving and pupils are making faster progress than previously, you acknowledge that further work is required to ensure that teaching is consistently good and pupils reach higher standards.

The revised school improvement plan accurately identifies the exact actions that will be taken to raise pupils' achievement, and improve teaching and pupils' behaviour outdoors. The plan makes clear who will monitor and evaluate the proposed actions. It also contains measurable success criteria against which governors can check the impact of leaders' actions on pupils' learning, and on teaching. School leaders and governors discuss and review the actions within the improvement plan regularly to make sure that the school is on track to get to 'good' by the time of its next inspection.

The 2016 provisional results show that the vast majority of children in Reception achieved a good level of development. The proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the standards expected in the phonics check was above average. The results at the end of Years 2 and 6 present a more mixed picture. The standards attained by pupils in Year 2 were above average in writing and below in reading and mathematics. Standards in Year 6 were broadly average in reading and mathematics and below in writing.

You and senior leaders have undertaken a thorough analysis of the 2016 results and the school's own assessment information to identify the pupils who would benefit from additional support. This support is helping pupils to catch up quickly with their learning. For example, your records show that pupils who have been given extra help with their reading have improved their reading age by more than a year in the space of a few weeks.

Senior leaders meet regularly with teachers to discuss and agree the actions that will be taken to raise the achievement of pupils. However, these actions are sometimes too vague and do not identify precisely what teachers need to do to help pupils make faster progress. You fully recognise that a few teachers would benefit from greater clarity during these meetings so that they can plan activities that better meet the needs of all pupils.

Teaching of English and mathematics is improving but remains variable. This is leading to inconsistent rates of progress. Work in pupils' books and visits to lessons confirm that rates of progress in mathematics are particularly strong in Years 1, 5 and 6. This is because pupils in these year groups, especially the most able, are quickly moved on to activities that deepen their mathematical thinking. Teachers in these year groups also make sure that pupils have regular opportunities to use their knowledge of numbers to solve complex problems and to develop their reasoning skills. Lower ability pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also achieve well because their activities successfully build on what they already know and understand. There is scope for sharing this effective practice across the school.

Following the inspection, senior leaders revised the school's approach to teaching and marking pupils' writing. Teachers have received relevant training and are now required to plan activities that enable pupils to practise their writing skills across different subjects. Senior leaders also expect teachers to help pupils to develop the stamina to produce extended pieces of writing that are grammatically correct and capture the interest of the reader. When marking pupils' writing, teachers are asked to show pupils how to edit and improve their work. Inspection evidence shows that while staff in Years 4 and 6 consistently adhere to the school's approach, this is not the case in the rest of the school.

Pupils' behaviour outdoors has improved, especially at lunchtime. School records show a marked decline in the number of incidents for both boys and girls. The introduction of a variety of playtime equipment has had a positive impact. Pupils enjoy taking part in a broad range of activities, such as skipping, football, netball, running and colouring. In contrast, there is very little for pupils to do during the morning break. The older pupils take up most of the playground space, leaving the younger pupils on the outskirts. Pupils told me that they would like their morning break to be more like lunchtime. As a result of this feedback from pupils, you intend to introduce play equipment during the morning break.

The governing body has a clear vision for the future for the school. Members are determined to do all they can to ensure that the school becomes good quickly. The members of the governing body responded positively to the review of governance. With the support of an external governor adviser, they have transformed the way in which they work. They now have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and successfully hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Senior leaders and governors make sure that they regularly

review and update school policies. However, some of the policies on the school website are out of date. Governors are planning to introduce regular website checks so that they can ensure that parents and the community have access to current information about the school.

Parents' views are now collected regularly and acted upon. You have established a forum that gives parents the chance to share their ideas and suggestions for improving the school. In response to comments from parents, appropriate changes have been made to the school's homework and behaviour policies. The parents I spoke with stated that they appreciate the more regular contact with school staff. Some specifically mentioned 'parent mail' (email messages) because this keeps them up to date with school events.

External support

The chair of the governing body was instrumental in securing external support from senior leaders at Knowle Primary Academy. This external support is effective and has contributed positively to the improvements in leadership, teaching and pupils' achievement. The external review of governance has helped governors to identify the aspects of their work that could be improved. With support from an external governor adviser, governance has been strengthened.

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

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi

Her Majesty's Inspector