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Mrs Julia Remington
Headteacher
Badsley Primary School
Badsley Moor Lane
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Dear Mrs Remington

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Badsley Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 19 June 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. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in May 2017, 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 recent section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- improve the rates of progress that pupils are making, particularly in reading and mathematics, at key stage 2
- raise the standards that pupils reach in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and with senior and middle leaders of the school. I also held discussions with a representative from the local authority and with a member of the governing body in order to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement action plan was evaluated. Information about the progress that pupils are currently making, and the quality of teaching, was considered. I made brief visits to lessons with members of your leadership team and I considered the quality of pupils' work. I spoke to a group of Year 5 pupils to ascertain their views on developments at school since the last inspection. I spoke to the leader of early years and I also met with your special educational needs coordinators.

Context

You have made some significant changes to middle leadership since the last inspection. You now have 'year group leads' in each year. These colleagues are a key feature of the accountability procedures that are now in place. They verify and analyse information about the progress that pupils are making and the standards that they are reaching, and they ensure that additional support is put into place when needed. One of your deputy headteachers now supports you more formally in the running of the school and acts as headteacher one day per week. Some middle leaders who were new to their role at the time of the previous inspection are now more established.

In January 2014, your school increased in size substantially, and incorporated pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 from the adjoining junior school that had closed. Your school had previously been an infant school, teaching pupils from Reception through to Year 2 only. Pupils currently in Year 6 are the first cohort to have been taught solely in your school for the whole of their education at key stage 2.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection, you have focused on developing accountability structures, and on ensuring that the processes and procedures for tracking the progress that pupils make are more robust. You have been successful in this endeavour. As a result, plans for improving both the quality of teaching and the depth of the curriculum on offer are precise and sensible. This is because they are based on accurate information. You are addressing the areas for improvement as identified in your last inspection report effectively. You are aware, however, that the rates of progress that pupils are making, although increasing, need to be accelerated further before outcomes can be judged to be good. This is particularly the case for reading and mathematics, as the progress that pupils have made in these subjects has been particularly weak.

You have seen some success in raising the standards that pupils reach. In 2017, for example, a greater proportion of pupils in Year 6 reached the standards expected for their age than had done so in 2016. Nonetheless, you are ambitious for the pupils in your care. You know that there is work still to do in raising standards of attainment at key stage 2 so that pupils are ready 'to fly' when they reach secondary school.

In the full knowledge that by the end of Year 6 in 2017 the progress that pupils had made in reading was weak, you took the step of radically changing provision in this subject. Lesson planning now focuses on ensuring that pupils engage well in subject content. There is a focus on developing pupils' learning skills. Team work, problem-solving, and developing listening skills are all integral parts of lessons. As a result, more pupils focus intently on any new information that is being presented by the teacher. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils are now more engaged in practising reading comprehension, and in developing skills such as deduction and inference. There is now a much more structured approach in this area of the curriculum. Teachers strategically help pupils to choose books at the right level for them and help any individual with issues that they may be having. Teachers have been well trained in these new approaches.

Similarly, in other subjects across the curriculum, including mathematics, the positive impact of improvements in pupils' focus in lessons can be seen. Your mnemonic 'listen, effort, achieve, respect, neat, enjoy, ready' (LEARNER) is well understood by pupils. In addition, your 'rainbow learners' strategy, which outlines expectations for behaviour, attitude and attendance, encourages pupils to engage positively at school. Here, privileges are directly linked to levels of focus, which move through stages from rainbow, to bronze, silver, and then to gold. For example, a pupil with a 'gold band' is someone who helps others put effort into their learning, among other attributes. As a reward, such a pupil has access to all 'playing zones' at lunchtime, including access to iPads. These systems are ensuring that your school is a calm place in which to learn.

Teaching at your school is characterised by a high level of consistency, and a strong level of focus on the part of many pupils. Teachers plan lessons that match the needs of pupils in their class increasingly well. The level of challenge that teachers offer pupils, and the expectations that staff have of them are increasing. Teachers are beginning to have a keener eye for detail. The choice of topics, and reading texts, now sparks the interest of more pupils. For example, I saw pupils in science learning about the sugar content of fizzy drinks during my visit. The exposition of the teacher, together with her lively questioning, fully engaged the pupils. Pupils were visibly excited by what they were learning.

The introduction of the role of year group leads has been pivotal in developing the quality of provision at school. One member of staff commented: 'We feel that teachers in each year group work effectively as a team now.' Others talking in the

group at the time, agreed with the sentiment. Your pupil progress meetings are now much more focused on the needs of individual pupils, and the way that you track pupil progress is more precise. Consequently, the interventions that your class teachers put into place are increasingly effective. Teachers feel more empowered, and year group leads have a full overview of the progress and needs of pupils in their care. Information that is given to the governing body allows them to ask searching questions, and to challenge you and other school leaders to do even better. I can see why teachers said that they feel part of a team, and that they feel that they are all working together now.

Other middle leaders use your improved assessment procedures to develop their areas of responsibility also. In early years, accurate observation notes help to check how well children are doing and to pinpoint their next steps. All adults working in early years are involved in this process and this is leading to more exacting plans for individual children. These plans include the use of the outdoor area, which is now better equipped to meet the needs of the curriculum. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also benefit from more precise targets linked to their needs, and a much timelier approach to supporting their learning.

You, together with other school leaders and members of the governing body, are tackling areas requiring improvement as identified at the last inspection effectively. You are working hard to ensure that the rates of progress that pupils make increase further, in order for your school to be judged as good at the next full inspection.

External support

You are being supported by the local authority. Members of the local authority have ensured that you receive support from a consultant head, in addition to an 'evaluator' who checks on the quality of provision at your school. Being designated as a 'school of concern' by the local authority, you can access additional support if this is deemed necessary. You feel that this package of support has been effective, and that inspection evidence confirms this.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Wardle

Her Majesty's Inspector