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Lindsay Roberts
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Roberts

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sandhurst Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 15 September 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 October 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 recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. The inspector visited each classroom with leaders and looked at work in pupils' books. The inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day and talked with pupils, during lessons, at breaktime and at lunchtime. A range of documents were evaluated, including information regarding pupils' progress, the governing body's notes of visits and local authority reports.

Context

Governors have worked hard to secure your appointment as interim executive headteacher, which is now permanent. A new head of school joined the school in January 2017. Leaders have appointed a behaviour support specialist and a new special educational needs coordinator. Two new governors have joined the governing body.

Main findings

You and the head of school work very well together and are a positive force for school improvement. Governors, the local authority and parents are overwhelmingly positive about the impact that senior leaders have had on the school.

Leaders know their school very well. Plans for improvement are appropriately ambitious, focused on the things that will make the biggest difference to pupils and clear about what success will look like. As a result, leaders have swiftly improved many aspects of the school's work. The school is now very well placed for its next full inspection.

Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors are clear about their roles and responsibilities. New governors have been recruited according to the attributes the governing body required. Induction for new members is effective. Governors use their time in school well. They make focused visits to track specific areas of school improvement. Governors use their time to ask appropriate questions of pupils and staff. As a result, governors are well placed to ask leaders pertinent questions about what they have seen and heard for themselves. The governors are committed to securing the long-term viability of their small school.

Behaviour in the school is good. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils are polite and play well together at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Pupils who need additional help to manage their self-control are very well supported. As a result, the behaviour of the most vulnerable pupils is also good. Parents and carers value the nurturing and caring support that pupils receive. Pupils say they are happy and feel safe in school.

Leaders and teachers now have a much more accurate view of the progress that pupils are making, including the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils. The local authority and governors use performance information well to hold leaders to account. At the end of key stage 2 in 2016, pupils, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged, made strong progress in reading and mathematics. The school's performance information, unvalidated pre-published data and work in pupils' books highlight that, in 2017, all pupils, including the most able and most able disadvantaged pupils, made strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

In 2016, science attainment at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 was strong. Current pupils make good progress. Leaders have worked with other schools to provide additional training for staff. Consequently, teachers are more confident to teach science. Pupils are given good opportunities to predict, experiment, test fairly, record their findings and draw conclusions. Teachers provide good opportunities for older pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge when they record and analyse their findings.

The quality of pupils' written work in subjects other than English has improved significantly. Teachers have higher expectations of pupils. As a result, the quality of pupils' handwriting, spelling and punctuation is consistent in all of their books.

External support

Governors and school leaders value the support and challenge of the local authority. Advisers have worked closely with leaders to improve the tracking of pupils' progress. A full review of the school's work, by advisers who were unfamiliar with the school, has provided good insight into what the school does well. The local authority secured timely reviews of governance and the school's use of pupil premium funding after the last inspection. The local authority is having a positive impact on the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Cole
Her Majesty's Inspector