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Mr R Tew
Leen Mills Primary School
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Dear Mr Tew

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Leen Mills Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 30 November 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 March 2017. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

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 a good school.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the English leader to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I held telephone conversations with the vice-chair of governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan and the school's self-evaluation were evaluated. I visited every classroom and looked at pupils' work from all year groups. I observed and spoke with pupils at breaktime on

the key stage 1 playground and met a group of pupils from key stage 2. I reviewed minutes from the meetings of the governing body, the findings from the external review of pupil premium funding and reports from the local authority. I also reviewed documents related to attendance and safeguarding.

Context

A new leader for the early years was appointed in September 2017. In addition, a Year 5 teacher was appointed. The deputy headteacher is on maternity leave. Her leadership role is being covered by the assistant headteacher and two other teachers with leadership responsibilities.

Main findings

You and your leadership team are leading the school well. You have acted quickly and effectively on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The quality of teaching is improving and pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are making better progress.

The assistant headteacher has a secure overview of how well all pupils are achieving in the school. She now shares this information with all other leaders and teachers. If pupils are not on track to make the progress that is expected of them, their needs are discussed and appropriate action is taken to accelerate their progress. Leaders hold regular meetings with teachers about the pupils' progress and review pupils' work to check if pupils are making good progress. Consequently, all staff have a good understanding of the next areas for improvement to increase the progress of pupils.

You have responded well to the findings of the external review of pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils. You have increased the challenge in lessons for all pupils. In addition, you have increased the amount of assessments for disadvantaged pupils to check more frequently their knowledge of times tables, their spelling age and their reading age. You use this information to plan appropriate intervention groups to meet their needs and boost their progress. Finally, you are checking the quality of the intervention groups to ensure that the funding is being used well. The school's pupil tracking information shows that most disadvantaged pupils are making good progress. However, not enough disadvantaged pupils are making accelerated progress to achieve highly.

The lower-attaining pupils are making good progress. Teachers are mostly correcting pupils' misconceptions to enable pupils to learn quickly. This group of pupils made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, through key stage 2 in 2017, compared to other pupils nationally who had the same prior attainment at the end of key stage 1. Scrutiny of current pupils' work shows that the less able pupils are continuing to make good progress.

The provisional results of the end-of-key-stage-2 assessments in 2017 showed all pupils are making better progress. The progress of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics was in the top 40% of all schools nationally. Disadvantaged pupils made broadly average progress except in mathematics, where progress was better. However, the proportion of pupils who attained highly at the end of key stage 2 was lower than other pupils nationally in every subject, particularly in writing and mathematics. Similarly, the proportion of pupils who attained highly at the end of key stage 1 in 2017 was lower in reading and writing than for other pupils nationally, but the same in mathematics.

Scrutiny of current pupils' work shows that teachers are challenging the most able pupils in Years 5 and 6. One Year 6 pupil wrote in a diary extract from the Crimean War, 'As I am writing this, I think of the horror I have experienced. I look up at the incandescent moon and think how lucky I am.' In Year 5, teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to express their thoughts about their reading to develop their inference skills. However, these opportunities are not as prevalent in Years 3 and 4.

In mathematics, pupils are being asked to explain their thinking mathematically to show a deep understanding of the concepts they are learning. However, they do not get enough opportunities to demonstrate their thinking. In addition, some most-able pupils feel the work is too easy for them and does not make them think hard.

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are being challenged. Pupils In Year 1 had to estimate the capacity of containers and explain their estimate. They had to use their knowledge of the capacity of other containers to give an appropriate estimate. Most pupils succeeded to give a realistic estimate. Pupils are making good progress in their books. Occasionally, teachers are not correcting pupils' misconceptions and their progress slows.

The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors regularly come into school and focus their visits on the areas for improvement. Minutes of the governing body meetings show that governors asking pertinent questions to school leaders about the progress of pupils.

External support

The school has received good support from the local authority adviser. He has supported the school to identify the key areas for improvement and quality assured leaders' judgements about the quality of teaching. The local authority brokered support from Fairfield Primary Academy. This has enabled the school to improve the quality of leadership and teaching at the school. The headteacher from Fairfield has worked with leaders at all levels at the school to support and challenge them in their roles. In addition, leaders have visited other outstanding schools to improve teaching and learning. Teachers moderate pupils' work with teachers from Fairfield and from other schools to check the accuracy of the school's assessments. You are

now confident in the accuracy of your assessments in 2017, particularly in key stage 1, after very high outcomes in 2016.

The school is also part of The Spencer Academies Trust. Leaders from the trust have carried out a detailed review of the pupil premium funding and following their recommendations, the school has scrutinised the impact of intervention groups. Disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress.

Priorities for further improvement

The school should take further action to:

- increase the number of opportunities for pupils to reason mathematically to enable more pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, to attain highly
- ensure that pupils in all year groups develop their inference skills (using clues from the text) to enable them to have a deep understanding of the texts that they are reading.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Finch
Her Majesty's Inspector