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Ian Golding
Principal
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Dear Mr Golding

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Parkfield School

Following my visit to your school on 16 May 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in April 2015. 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.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that leaders use the assessment and monitoring systems, that are now embedded within the school for English and mathematics, to place a sharp focus on all other curriculum subjects
- set high expectations for all pupils and provide work that matches closely the varying needs of pupils
- secure the smooth transition of pupils between key stages by ensuring that pupils transferring from key stage 2 into key stage 3 are supported effectively to make a strong start to key stage 3.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the principal, senior pupils from the primary department and pupils from the senior school, and a representative from the interim academy board (IAB), to discuss the actions taken since the previous monitoring inspection in November 2016. The school's self-evaluation and improvement plans were evaluated. The school's records of safeguarding arrangements were reviewed. Together with the principal, the inspector carried out learning walks and held meetings with teachers and teaching assistants, middle leaders, senior leaders and pupil representatives. The outcomes of monitoring activities and the impact of leaders' performance management of staff were also reviewed.

Context

There have been significant changes to the circumstances of this school since the first monitoring inspection took place. A new interim principal took up his post in April this year. He has built on and expanded the leadership team within the school to include middle leader representatives from all key stages in the school. The IAB continues to work closely with the regional schools commissioner's office to secure a new academy sponsor. The school was due to move to a new school site in April this year. This has been delayed until September 2017. The IAB's term as governing body has been extended until the end of this academic year. One teacher left the school at the end of last term and has not been replaced. One teaching assistant has returned from maternity leave.

Main findings

In the short time you have been in post you have secured the confidence of staff and parents. You have made a strong and positive start to your time as principal of this school. Parents and staff who spoke with me all welcome your clear and confident leadership. Staff in particular appreciate the sensitive and respectful way you are building on the good work that was begun by your predecessor to address the areas of weakness that were identified at the last inspection.

You have correctly identified that not enough work has been done to secure the seamless progression of pupils' learning as they move through the school. The lack of challenge and support that was too common in lessons is now being effectively challenged. You have begun to manage the demands and complexities of the new school building without becoming distracted from your main work of improving teaching and learning throughout the school. You have brought stability to staffing the school. The expansion of the leadership team to include leaders from each key stage across the school has ensured a more equitable leadership focus. Previously,

leadership had been secondary-focused. This is regarded by staff as a positive improvement as the primary school team now have a voice that is heard.

The expansion of the school's leadership team is already beginning to strengthen the school's capacity to improve. Following my first monitoring inspection in November 2016 the previous interim principal set about introducing a raising achievement plan that was tightly focused on holding senior leaders regularly and rigorously to account for the learning and progress of pupils. Senior leaders now hold high expectation for what pupils might achieve.

The effective assessment and monitoring of pupils' learning and progress has now been securely introduced throughout the school for English and mathematics. This information is used well by senior leaders to ensure the curriculum in these subjects is as carefully planned as possible to secure pupils' good progress. Outcomes for pupils at key stage 4 remain a cause for concern. The regular checks on pupils' learning and progress in English and mathematics are not so well developed in other subjects. Leaders are acutely aware they now need to apply the same sharp focus of assessment to all other curriculum subjects. Senior leaders are now determinedly working to address this issue through the implementation of improved assessment arrangements, raising teachers' expectations for what pupils might achieve and by securing consistency in how teachers review pupils' work and give them feedback.

Communication systems within the school have improved at all levels. Governors and members of the IAB are kept up to date with the work of the school. They know the school's strengths and areas for development. The performance management of staff is rigorously monitored. Where weak teaching occurs strategies to improve this are quickly put into place. Senior leaders are aware of the need to keep up to date in reviewing school policies and ensuring the impact of the school's work is regularly reviewed and outcomes published on the school's website.

Teachers' raised expectations for what pupils can achieve are ensuring more pupils are being provided with work that better meets their learning need and challenges the most able pupils in particular. The learning and progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been particularly well enhanced. Senior leaders are able to now evidence, through their regular monitoring, the progress of individual pupils and groups. Teachers now use senior leaders' regular monitoring updates to plan more effectively for pupils' next steps in learning. Gaps in pupils' learning are being identified more accurately and higher rates of progress for pupils have been set by senior leaders.

Children in the early years continue to make good progress from the time they start school. Despite the challenge of children starting school at different times throughout the year staff have remained successfully focused on quickly identifying children's aptitudes, setting high expectations and providing an effective learning environment in what remain far from ideal circumstances. Changes to the way

children and pupils from key stage 1 are taught to read have been successfully introduced with a focus on the pupils' stage of learning rather than their age. The monitoring of children's learning and their transition from the early years into key stage 1 has been strengthened through the better use of assessment, good communication with parents and confident leadership. Leaders acknowledge the need to use this information in setting the next steps in children's learning. This year's most recent assessments indicate that over 80% of children are demonstrating good levels of development in all areas of learning.

The careful organisation of teaching provision in key stage 1, staff's raised expectations and typically good teaching throughout the primary school has led to more pupils making better progress in key stages 1 and 2. Overall, leaders are confident that the learning and progress of pupils in the primary school has greatly improved this academic year as a result of better teaching, learning and assessment. They are confident that outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 will be closer to the national average, which will be a significant improvement on last year. The effective transition arrangements for pupils between key stages, especially into key stages 3 and 4, are underdeveloped. In addition the school continues to receive a growing number of new pupils at different times throughout the year, which adds a further challenge to securing a smooth and seamless transition in learning for pupils, particularly for older pupils.

Since the previous monitoring inspection the professional development of all staff has been made a priority. Teachers and teaching assistants who met with me all agreed that their professional development is taken seriously and they feel more confident to carry out their roles. All staff are being held to account through specific appraisal targets that are closely linked to the effectiveness of their teaching and its impact on pupils' achievements. Staff in the senior school have received bespoke training to develop consistency in teaching, learning, marking and in giving feedback to pupils. Those who spoke with me confirmed they appreciate the much clearer assessment procedures that have been introduced in the past year.

Effective behaviour management strategies are embedded throughout the school. Pupils who spoke with me from each key stage all agreed that behaviour is well managed and they feel safe in school at all times. Older pupils in particular say they appreciate the effort their teachers put into marking and giving them constructive feedback. As a result, pupils say they mostly know how well they are doing in lessons, especially in English and mathematics. They know what they need to do to push themselves to make even better progress.

External support

Increasingly in the past year, the school has looked for ways to enhance teachers' professional development through working more closely with other schools and partners; for example through meetings to agree the standards of pupils' work and developing teachers' subject knowledge. Senior leaders and governors are

continuing to work closely with the regional schools commissioner's office to secure a permanent academy sponsor.

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

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector