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24 January 2020

Mrs Josephine Garnham  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Garnham

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Meadowside Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 8 January 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

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:

- ensure that all curriculum subjects are planned sequentially to build pupils' knowledge over time.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team, four subject leaders, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions

taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plans were evaluated. I visited lessons across all year groups with the headteacher, conducted a scrutiny of pupils' work, considered leaders' whole-school curriculum planning, discussed leaders' procedures and records relating to pupils' behaviour and safeguarding, and considered the school's most recent published performance data.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection, there have been several changes in staffing and leadership. Several members of staff are new to the school. A deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2018. A new middle leadership team has been formed. In January 2019, the early years was restructured to include Nursery provision. An experienced professional was appointed chair of the governing body in September 2018.

## **Main findings**

Since the last inspection, leadership of the school has strengthened and improved. Senior leaders work as a cohesive team. They have developed an effective middle leadership team. Middle leaders support the necessary improvements to the quality of education. They work with teachers to improve the implementation of the curriculum.

Teachers use assessment well to pinpoint pupils' next steps. They plan work based on their assessments of what pupils know and can do. Leaders make regular checks on the accuracy of teachers' assessments. They make sure that teachers plan work to meet the needs of all pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils. The headteacher has established a rigorous system for the appraisal of staff performance. This system is helping to raise standards and improve pupils' achievement. This is particularly the case for children in the early years and in key stage 1.

Leaders place a sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders provide guidance and support to teachers to help them develop their expertise. This is having a positive impact on the quality of education which the school provides. For example, staff training in the teaching of phonics is rapidly improving pupils' reading skills.

The teaching of writing and mathematics is improving. Pupils write for a variety of purposes in different subjects. A new approach to teaching pupils to spell is improving the quality of pupils' writing and reading. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' writing and handwriting. Teachers now use a consistent strategy to teach mathematics. Teachers encourage pupils to explain and explore their mathematical understanding. Pupils enjoy opportunities to 'dig deeper' to solve

more complex problems when they can. Leaders are ambitious to make further improvements to ensure that all pupils achieve their best.

Leaders and staff have reviewed the school's curriculum. They are developing subject plans which aim to broaden pupils' experiences and make them aware of their roles as global citizens. However, plans are in the early stages. Some subjects are not planned to build pupils' knowledge sequentially.

School development plans are accurately focused on the necessary improvements. Leaders ensure that there are adequate opportunities for new initiatives to be established and sustained. Governors are knowledgeable and supportive of senior leaders. They hold them to account for the effectiveness and impact of their actions to improve the school.

### **External support**

The local authority has provided effective support for the headteacher and governing body to develop the quality of education. School leaders have also brokered support from an independent adviser to check on the progress of the actions taken. Leaders and staff work with other schools and external specialists well to develop good practice and improve teaching.

The support has empowered school leaders to take decisive action in the areas identified as requiring improvement at the last inspection. Sustainable improvements to the school environment, teaching and the curriculum are successfully raising expectations for pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Innes-Taylor  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**