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Miss K Law
Headteacher
Castleford Park Junior Academy
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Dear Miss Law

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Castleford Park Junior Academy

Following my visit to your school on 8 December 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 September 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in September 2016, 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 last section 5 inspection in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- embed the work that has begun so that it has an increasingly positive impact on the progress of disadvantaged and more able pupils across the school.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, the governing body and two representatives of the trust to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. A learning walk, involving visits to lessons, was undertaken with the headteacher and a scrutiny of

pupils' books took place with literacy and mathematics leaders. Meetings were held with pupils and a group of parents. A range of documents including the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation were scrutinised.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection in September 2016, the number on roll has increased to 407 pupils. A deputy headteacher has been appointed from within the school and two assistant headteachers have also been appointed.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection, a period of stability in staffing has enabled you and governors to expand the senior leadership team. You and your new leadership team are keeping the work in classrooms under close scrutiny. Well-founded decisions and strategic plans aided and supported by the trust and governors demonstrate your ambition for pupils. School improvement plans show clear actions and high expectations. They are aiding your sharp evaluation and reporting to governors. Governors are beginning to see the impact of the plans more securely in classrooms and in their reviews of pupils' work.

You are driving improvement in the quality of teaching and assessment confidently and consistently across the school. The leaders of literacy and mathematics are acting quickly to strengthen and align the focus on improving the challenge and support for boys and disadvantaged pupils. The programme of training that began at the time of the previous inspection is helping teachers and support staff to improve their skills and bring more consistency to the quality of teaching in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers have higher expectations of pupils and are able to diagnose the barriers to pupils' learning more accurately as a result of the methods and approaches they have learned. Pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts is improving and their confidence in using different methods to support their calculation and number work is increasing. Pupils in Year 6 spoke about their enjoyment in lessons because of the greater emphasis on discussion and having to explain their thinking. For example, one pupil said, 'I wasn't confident at mathematics at the start of the year, but I am now.' Another pupil explained, 'When I get things wrong, I'm learning more quickly how to put them right.'

Governors have ensured, through the resources they have allocated, that the work taking place in reading gets off to a good start. The library has been redeveloped and extended. Pupils like the wide range of books and are beginning to make guided choices to expand and deepen their reading. All pupils know their book levels and how to choose. A culture of learning is becoming established in the school. Pupils' love of reading and determination to achieve the most they can are very evident in classes and all age groups. Pupils are increasingly developing the skills to summarise and predict, and they link this to their understanding of what they have read.

The deputy headteacher provides strong oversight of the progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. These pupils are becoming more confident in the basic skills of mathematics, reading and writing. They are drawing upon their reading to develop and improve their own writing about characters. They are using interesting words that they have collected and applied accurately to make their stories exciting. A focus on more timely feedback to pupils helps teachers to tackle misunderstandings and misconceptions more quickly. Pupils welcome the feedback they now receive. They say, 'I have to check my work, but I also know that when I get things wrong I'm learning faster how to put them right.'

Together with leaders, you have acted to tackle the issues around accuracy and use of assessment information since the last inspection. Secure systems are in place around assessment and moderation. Teachers have access to more information about the pupils in their classes and greater collaboration and moderation take place. Parents were pleased to see a smooth transition as their children moved into new classes at the start of the year. Teachers are making better use of information to inform their planning in lessons. Senior leaders and class teachers now track pupils' performance carefully and more frequently during the year. This is enabling staff to identify when pupils' progress begins to stall and put support in place. Consequently, a greater number of pupils are on track in Years 3, 4 and 6. Year 5 pupils are making swifter progress since the start of term in response to more consistent teaching after the extensive absence of a teacher in the previous year. The key focus of the school's work is to enable more pupils to work at greater depth and to improve mathematics and writing and particularly the performance of boys and disadvantaged pupils.

External support

You are drawing effectively on the external support provided to the school by the Castleford Multi-Academy Trust. This work has helped to support your plans to improve the quality of teaching through training, moderation and assessment.

An external review of pupil premium, commissioned early in 2017, was not as helpful in guiding this aspect of leadership as governors had hoped. Although attainment rose in 2017 for all groups of pupils, you recognise that there is still more to do to make sure that disadvantaged pupils make the progress they are capable of.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer or equivalent of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wakefield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector