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18 July 2011

Mrs W Adamson
Headteacher
Park Primary School
Monmouth Road
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN2 4JP

Dear Mrs Adamson,

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Park Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 15 July 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff, local authority colleagues and the Chair of the Governing Body with whom I met during the day.

Since the last inspection the school has received the support of local authority advisors and a consultant headteacher from a local school, both at a classroom and leadership level. The school has also faced a number of significant staffing issues, some of which remain.

As a result of the inspection on 13 January 2011, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter. Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making inadequate progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The inspection has raised very serious concerns. These will be considered by the appropriate Regional Director, Inspection Delivery, who will decide when the school will receive further inspection.

Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics remains too low throughout the school. School data confirms that by the end of Key Stage 1 attainment in reading and writing has fallen since last year, but remains broadly similar to last year in mathematics. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment in English has also declined since last year, although it too has remained broadly similar to last year in mathematics. Work seen in pupils' books, together with assessment data provided by the school, demonstrates that during the spring term far too many pupils across the school did not make enough progress to enable gaps in their learning to be addressed quickly enough. Senior leaders have very recently developed a new system for monitoring the progress pupils make and the attainment they reach. However, this is not helping pupils to make faster progress because the information has not

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been shared widely enough with all teachers so as to make a difference to the lessons they plan.

The quality of marking remains very inconsistent. Whilst marking has improved slightly in some year groups, too much work remains unmarked. This is not helping pupils to know how well they are doing, or what needs to be done to improve their work. In a very small number of classes the school is piloting a strategy to accelerate the progress pupils make in their writing, by improving the quality of marking and the opportunities pupils have to assess their own work. This is beginning to have a positive impact as it is helping a very small minority of pupils to gain a better understanding of how they can improve their work. The better progress now being made by pupils in these few classes, however, is not reflected across the school as a whole because this practice is so isolated.

The quality of teaching is not improving and it is now less effective than at the time of the last inspection. Measures to enhance the quality of teaching have been largely unsuccessful and are failing to improve rates of progress in the classroom. Lessons are increasingly practical and engage pupils more actively in their learning. This has been appreciated by pupils, who were keen to explain that lessons are now more fun. However, teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of remains much too low and the pace of learning in lessons is not fast enough. Work is now set for different abilities within the class and teaching assistants deployed to support different groups. Planning is becoming more focused and support staff are more aware of their role within the lesson. However, time is not being used effectively. Much of the group work is completed at the pace of the slowest and the level of challenge for the more-able pupils, in particular, is not rising. This causes pupils within the group to become disengaged and not apply themselves as well as they might. Teachers ensure pupils are completing their work rather than assessing whether the task is actually stretching and challenging enough. Senior leaders' evaluations of the progress pupils make in some lessons are sometimes over generous. This is not helping teachers' understanding of how to improve the quality of work.

The schools' senior leadership team have been ineffective in addressing the areas identified at the last inspection. The headteacher has been managing some of the difficult staffing issues, whilst others have remained unchallenged. There has been insufficient focus on improving attendance. As a result pupils' attendance remains low and declining; attendance this year is lower than last year. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has also significantly increased. Actions taken by the school have not been any more effective than at the time of the last inspection because they have not been consistently reinforced or monitored with enough rigour.

Following the previous inspection, the school developed a plan for improvement which focused on measurable outcomes for pupils. The plan, however, failed to identify what would be required at specific times during the term to ensure any improvements remained on track. Whilst governors appreciated that these key performance indicators would be helpful they failed to ensure they were acted upon. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, although some aspects of record keeping require more robust monitoring.

The statement of action, produced by the local authority following the last inspection, did not fully meet requirements. It was amended appropriately and is now fit for purpose. The support initially commissioned by the local authority was not sufficiently focused or helpful enough to enable the school to make the improvements that are now urgently required. As a result the school did not meet the targets set by the authority for pupils' attendance or their attainment. The local authority has recently conducted a review of the progress being made by the school and the impact of its own actions. They have rightly restructured their support for September, which includes a seconded full-time assistant headteacher and advisory support for two days per week.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mr James Alexander
Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 13 Jan 2011

- Raise attainment and improve rates of progress in English and mathematics by:
 - increasing the proportion of pupils who make at least expected rates of progress across Key Stage 1 and 2
 - increasing the proportion of pupils who meet or exceed the expected levels of attainment for their age
 - ensuring that these priorities are a key expectation of all teachers as part of their shared accountability for raising attainment.

- Improve the quality of teaching, ensuring more is of a consistently good standard by:
 - providing pupils with opportunities for speaking and listening and to be more actively involved in lessons
 - ensuring a brisk pace in all lessons
 - developing pupils' independence in their learning
 - ensuring that teachers' marking is more effective in guiding pupils to improve their work
 - matching lesson activities more accurately to the needs of all pupils to support and challenge their learning.

- Raise attendance so that it is at least in-line with national average.