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18 September 2012

Mrs Sandford
Headteacher
Starbeck Community Primary School
High Street
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North Yorkshire
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Dear Mrs Sandford

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Starbeck Community Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 19 September 2012, and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please extend my thanks to the pupils, staff and governors that I met during the day.

As a result of the inspection on 6 February 2012, 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 satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Since the previous inspection, pupils are making better progress as they move through Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils' performance at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2012 shows an improvement on the previous year in reading and writing. In mathematics most pupils achieved in line with national expectations. Unvalidated results for national tests in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2012 show a notable improvement on the previous year. These outcomes suggest that the school has now met the government floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Pupils are making better progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2 because of improvements to the quality of teaching and subject leadership. Teachers are providing more opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve mathematical problems often linked to real-life situations. This makes learning more meaningful and enjoyable. Expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving in mathematics have been raised. Most pupils talk with confidence about their targets and are aware of what they need to do to improve. The use of assessment during lessons to identify pupils' misconceptions and plan accordingly is improving, but it is not consistent across the school. There is evidence of good practice where teachers use questioning to identify a lack of understanding and proceed to plan activities designed to move learning forward. However, while teachers' planning generally

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makes reference to meeting the needs of individuals and groups of pupils it is not always evident during lessons and this can inhibit progress. This is particularly relevant to the more able pupils who are not always sufficiently challenged. School leaders are aware of this as they appreciate that the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 remains a key area for improvement.

Pupils are given more opportunities to work independently to practise their skills and apply their knowledge. The use of targeted questioning enabling pupils to reflect and articulate their understanding in order to consolidate their learning is one of the reasons why pupils are making better progress. During the monitoring inspection it was evident that teachers are trying to inject greater pace into lessons. As a result, pupils are interested in what is going on and are more focused during the lesson. It is also reflected in greater pupil engagement during lessons where they are actively participating in their learning by sharing ideas with their peers, joining in discussions and practising and applying skills using notepads and interactive whiteboards. On occasions, teachers place too much emphasis on the speed of their delivery and not enough time in consolidating pupils understanding.

Inconsistencies in the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage remain. Pupils are making better progress in the Nursery than within Reception. This is because all activities, whether they are teacher directed or child initiated have a purpose and provide good opportunities to enhance progress. Some children in Reception are too often engaged in activities in which the learning intention is not clear and as a consequence progress is limited. Since the previous inspection insufficient attention has been given to the provision of high quality, relevant and appropriate learning experiences that will support the progress of all children. The headteacher is aware that improvement is required in this key stage and that it must happen soon.

The headteacher and staff have worked diligently to address the issues raised at the previous inspection. While improvements to provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage have not materialised, the focus on teaching and learning in Key Stages 1 and 2 is leading to better provision and rising achievement, especially in mathematics. Subject leaders, particularly those responsible for English and mathematics, are making a positive contribution to raising achievement. They now have a clearer understanding of progress and attainment across the school. They know which areas require improvement and have action plans in place to bring this about. Monitoring by subject leaders is better than it was in February 2012 but it is not yet rigorous enough to ensure that recently introduced teaching and learning strategies are embedded across the school. Pupil progress meetings have been established to identify underachievement and hold teachers to account. The governing body, through the school improvement group are developing strategies to monitor progress against the issues raised in the previous inspection report and developing a better understanding of the work of the school.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose. Satisfactory support has been provided in respect of the areas identified for improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Mr Christopher Keeler
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2012

- Raise pupils' attainment, accelerate progress and eliminate underachievement in mathematics, especially in Key Stage 2, by:
 - ensuring that all teaching is at least good
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve mathematical problems, especially linked to real-life situations
 - ensuring that work is challenging for all pupils and that pupils practise their skills, apply their knowledge and record their achievements.
- Eliminate inadequate teaching and ensure that the satisfactory teaching becomes good by:
 - injecting greater pace into lessons so that pupils always have enough time to work independently on work that always challenges them
 - using assessment information more effectively to meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more able
 - ensuring that pupils always have opportunities to share what they have learnt, and how challenging they found their work, to help inform teachers' planning for the next lesson
 - checking that marking always helps pupils to improve as well as acknowledge what they have achieved.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leaders and managers by:
 - building on work already started, to monitor rigorously the impact of improvement plan priorities on pupils' outcomes
 - developing further the roles of subject leaders to ensure that they are fully accountable for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Eradicate inconsistencies in the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.