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Mr Colin Fleetwood
Headteacher
Haig Primary School
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Dear Mr Fleetwood

Additional measures monitoring inspection of Haig Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 January 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2012.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leadership team, middle leaders, four members of the school governance committee and two representatives from Service Children's Education (SCE). The statement of action written by SCE and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

The headteacher in post at the time of the previous inspection left the school at the end of October 2012. The Chief Inspector, SCE, has acted as executive headteacher of the school since that time. A new permanent headteacher, experienced in the leadership of SCE schools, took up post two days before this monitoring inspection.

An SCE consultant has worked in the school full time as a senior leader since late November 2012.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The executive headteacher and the SCE inspector/adviser acted swiftly to establish a clear baseline from which to judge improvements in teaching. They undertook lesson observations in every classroom and provided pertinent points for improvement. A further round of lesson observations across the school was due to take place on the date of this inspection. Encouragingly, some teachers are asking for help to improve their teaching.

Essentially, senior leaders have clarified expectations of the teaching of phonics for early reading and writing so that all members of staff now understand what is required. Pupils are now set within each year group from Foundation Stage 2 to Year 3 by ability for phonics teaching which is timetabled daily. The teaching of phonics is not yet second nature to all teachers and is not yet an embedded feature of lessons beyond dedicated phonics slots.

Senior leaders have introduced systems to check pupils' progress more closely. Although teachers' judgements about the standards reached by each pupil in reading, writing and mathematics are not yet guaranteed accurate, these systems provide the basis for more rigorous discussions about pupils' progress between classteachers and senior leaders. As a result of these discussions, the most serious gap in each pupil's learning has now been pinpointed and a target agreed for each pupil in reading, writing or mathematics to remedy the gap.

Middle leaders have been enthused by the pace of change introduced by the executive headteacher since the previous inspection. They describe the 'can do' approach of the executive headteacher and the newly appointed headteacher and cite specific examples where barriers to pupils' learning have been instantly overcome through better timetabling.

Service Children's Education has made the improvement of education at Haig School its highest priority. This is reflected in its willingness to second two members of its staff into the school immediately after the inspection. The speed at which a new permanent headteacher has been appointed is laudable.

The SCE statement of action and school improvement plan contain some very ambitious targets. Although praiseworthy, such ambition renders it problematic for the school governance committee to take a measured and informed view of the progress being made by the school. In addition, the school improvement plan is

based over too short a time scale and does not give an overview of intended actions and expected progress in the longer term. Within the plan, responsibilities for each action, and responsibilities for monitoring whether actions have been undertaken are not yet consistently specified by post or role. Similarly, arrangements for evaluating the impact of actions on pupils' achievement are not always entirely clear.

The school governance committee is keen to take on a greater role in supporting the school and in holding senior leaders to account. They recognise that they require specialised training to ensure that they are able to undertake their evaluative functions.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose

The school's improvement/action plan(s) is fit for purpose

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the School Governance Committee and the Chief Executive, Service Children's Education.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Bradley Simmons
Her Majesty's Inspector