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16 January 2013

Ms Wendy Wheldon
Headteacher
Greengate Lane Primary School
Greengate Lane
High Green
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S35 3GT

Dear Ms Wheldon

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Greengate Lane Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 15 January 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, the Chair and other members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and the Chief Executive Officer of the ISIS Academies Trust. The school action plan was evaluated. Documents were also scrutinised including the updated marking policy and recent review of marking, a sample of work books, records of lesson observations, the teaching and learning support log and records of staff mentoring.

Context

There has been no change to staffing since the last inspection. The governing body has appointed a new Chair. The school is scheduled to convert to an academy from

1 February and will become a founding member of the ISIS Academies Trust with two other schools located outside the local area.

Main findings

The headteacher and deputy headteacher share a very clear vision for improvement and are ambitious for the school to 'get to good' as soon as possible. The school action plan has been amended by senior and middle leaders to increase its focus on key priorities. Clearly stated success criteria include 'non-negotiable' outcomes for both staff and pupils in order to raise expectations about what should and might be achieved. Middle leaders have taken responsibility for more detailed improvement plans, focusing on specific aspects of the school's work. Regular checks are in place to assess progress towards meeting objectives in the short and medium term. These checks are linked clearly to arrangements for the management of staff performance. However, the means by which the impact on improving outcomes will be measured is not always identified clearly.

Leaders have taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching and its impact on learning across the school. Existing best practice within the school is being shared regularly to promote improvement across all years. Strategies that are already proving to be effective include:

- the introduction of a tailored mentoring programme to increase the proportion of good teaching
- a whole-school focus on lesson planning to sharpen learning expectations and plug gaps in pupils' prior learning
- the implementation of an updated marking policy to improve the quality of feedback given to pupils and next steps for improvement

A new 'Challenge Curriculum' is also being piloted in Key Stage 1 to increase pupils' independence as learners and to stretch those who are more able.

Governors are developing strategies that will enable them to implement policies more effectively. For example, one governor, who has recently taken responsibility for safeguarding, has benefited from training and has extended links with staff to increase her understanding of the school's work. An external review has not taken place to review the work of the governing body although an audit of skills and expertise is planned. The forthcoming conversion to academy status presents new opportunities for good practice to be shared and for governors to hold leaders more closely to account for pupils' performance.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- ensure that leaders are clear about how the impact of actions to drive improvement will be measured

- develop the skills further of the governing body so that they are able to make a full contribution to holding the school to account for pupils' performance.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school has not relied extensively on external support to improve the quality of teaching. However, leaders have identified where additional support has been required and have commissioned the services of an external adviser to strengthen leadership and improve teaching. Since the section 5 inspection, local authority support has been valued in providing training for governors and completing a review of the post-inspection action plan.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Sheffield and as below.

Yours sincerely

Sara Morrissey

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority
- the academy chain where relevant
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.