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Louise Anyan
Headteacher
The Donington-on-Bain School
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Dear Mrs Anyan

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to The Donington-on-Bain School

Following my visit to your school on 21 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 and the strategic development partner, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated along with other key school documents, including lesson observation records.

Context

There have been a small number of changes since the recent inspection which judged the school to require improvement. One of the teaching assistants has left the school and a replacement has been recruited. A partnership or 'soft federation' between this school and King Edward V Grammar School has been established. The headteacher from that school has taken on the role of strategic development partner while a senior teacher has become the head of school. The strategic partner has responsibility for the strategic planning and development and the head of school has day-to-day responsibility for the management and implementation of the school and the development plan. The head of school holds the statutory powers of the headteacher.

Main findings

The partnership between this school and King Edward V Grammar Schools has continued to develop. Staff and governors are keen to bring about improvement in order to provide pupils with a good education. The school improvement plan has been rewritten to take account of the inspection findings. Although the most important areas for improvement are addressed or implied within the plan it does not explicitly address all areas for improvement which were identified at the last inspection. In some cases it does not specify the detail of how and when improvement will be brought about. The improvement plan identifies clear success criteria but does not always identify key milestones against which progress can be measured. The arrangements for checking on the impact of planned actions do not always specify the personnel who will do this work or how the checks will be made.

The arrangements for self-evaluation have been improved and include regular observations of lessons, work scrutiny and reports to governors. Lesson observations generally identify strengths along with suggestions for improvements. Staff training, linked directly to some areas for improvement, has taken place and senior leaders' evaluations consider this is having a positive impact. A new electronic system to track the attainment and progress of pupils has been introduced. The use of this is in its infancy but offers good potential for analysing trends and patterns across the school.

Governors are committed to bringing about improvement. A positive step has been the establishment of an annual cycle of activities for governors. This provides a clear indication of the range of meetings that governors will hold. However, the plan does not identify exactly what information will be presented to governors, when or by whom, and how this links to the areas for improvement. A revised system of sharing information with governors is being introduced by the strategic development partner so that governors are provided with a termly evaluation of pupil attainment and progress data along with reports from the observations of lessons and work scrutiny. This will leave governors in a better position to both challenge and support the work of the school

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take 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:

- improve the school improvement plan so that it more explicitly addresses how the school will tackle each of the areas for improvement
- ensure the school improvement plan identifies clear milestones so that progress can be measured along with how and who will check on the impact of planned developments

- ensure that the governors are able to evaluate the school's progress and identify what information will be provided to them, when and by whom.



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

External support

Senior leaders are engaging well with the local authority. The local authority advisor has supported the school through a period of change, provided additional resources and has brokered support from teaching and learning consultants. The school and the governing body are working well with the partner school and the strategic development partner in tackling the school's weaknesses.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire local authority.

Yours sincerely

Amraz Ali

Her Majesty's Inspector