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24 January 2013

Mrs Stacey and Mr MacDonald
Interim Headteachers
Norman Pannell School
Brownbill Bank
Liverpool
Merseyside
L27 7AE

Dear Mrs Stacey and Mr MacDonald

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Norman Pannell School on 24 January 2013

Following my visit to your school on 24 January, 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

The inspector held meetings with the two interim headteachers, three substantive leaders, with three members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority. During the visit, Her Majesty's Inspector evaluated the school's improvement plans, looked at documents relating to teachers' appraisal and the monitoring of teaching and learning and was taken on a tour of the school.

Context

Since the inspection, the headteacher has been on extended sickness absence. Two interim headteachers from a local school are currently overseeing this role. A newly qualified teacher took up post in January and another class is also being taught by a newly qualified teacher who is covering a maternity leave.

Main findings

The interim headteachers have acted promptly to draw up plans which identify clear actions for the required improvements in teaching and learning, leadership and improving pupils' progress. These have clear criteria for success and identify the need to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, for longer term improvements the

current plan does not have the necessary interim milestones for improvement which will help senior leaders and the governing body monitor the school's progress.

Leaders, governors and the local authority all agree that the priorities for improvement and the judgements reached by the inspection were the correct ones. The governing body has reinstated a challenge board in partnership with the local authority. The role of the monitoring group has been refocused to enable members to hold senior leaders to account for pupils' progress and the improvements required by the action plan.

The interim headteachers have not yet observed teaching in all of the classes in the school. This means, a detailed evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, and of individual teachers, is not in place. Consequently those aspects requiring improvement are not clearly identified or closely linked to teachers' performance management objectives.

Substantive leaders are positive about the future of the school. However, this enthusiasm is not yet clearly focused on the ambition to drive improvement more rapidly. While they have undertaken monitoring activities these are not focused sharply enough on pupils learning and progress. The interim headteachers agree that a greater emphasis on the impact actions are having on the quality of pupils' learning is needed.

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 he visits the school again and that further action is taken to:

- revise the school's action plan to include measurable milestones, so that governors and senior leaders are able to easily measure the progress being made each term.
- develop the role of leaders so they have the skills to be key drivers of improvement and ensure their monitoring activities focus clearly on bringing about improvement in pupil's learning and progress.
- ensure there is a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching so that all teachers are clear about what they need to do to improve their teaching.

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

External support

The local authority has acted swiftly to secure interim arrangements for the school's leadership which has proved to be effective in developing plans to address the priorities for improvement. The local authority has put together a programme of support for subject leaders and will be monitoring improvements through the challenge board.

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

Yours sincerely

Adrian Guy
Her Majesty's Inspector