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Mrs Cath Whittingham
Headteacher
Manor Lodge Community Primary School
Manor Lane
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S2 1UF

Dear Mrs Whittingham

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Manor Lodge Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 26 March 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 deputy headteacher, subject leaders, governors, a group of pupils and a representative of the local authority. The inspector evaluated a range of documentation including: the school improvement and action plans; monitoring reports and records of lesson observations. In addition, the headteacher and deputy headteacher took the HMI on a tour of the school to look briefly at teaching and learning and the changes made to provision since the inspection.

Context

Since the inspection in November a new federated governing body has been established that includes a recently formed standards and data committee.

Main findings

Since the section 5 inspection, senior leaders and governors have reacted positively to the areas for improvement and have accepted that the priorities identified are the right ones for the school. Immediate action has been taken to lay the foundations for improvements in pupils' learning and in raising their achievement. For example, there are signs that teachers' expectations are higher and pupils are rising to them because teachers are more aware of the progress that pupils should make. There are regular reviews of how well pupils are achieving and staff are held to account for the progress their pupils are making. Improvements to tracking and target setting systems are enabling staff to identify more clearly those pupils who are underachieving and those that require greater challenge. As a result, the school is better placed to judge how well pupils are achieving and plan appropriate support.

The post inspection action plan addresses the main areas that need improvement and is suitably underpinned by clear milestones and success criteria by which actions can be measured. Senior leaders are correct in recognising that the next step is to be clearer by whom, when and how progress will be monitored and evaluated.

The school is becoming better informed about pupils' learning and the quality of teaching. Systems to check on the quality of provision are improving. Teachers are provided with clear targets for improvement as required. Work scrutiny exercises have been strengthened and the information gained is put to better use. Plans to include the views of pupils about their learning are in the pipeline.

Governance has become sharper-edged. Governors are aware of why the school is not yet good. They know what is being done to improve provision because they are better informed about what goes on in school and how well the school is improving. Their early actions are demonstrating a clear understanding of the school's most pressing priorities and a resolve to challenge senior leaders and hold them to account.

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:

- fine-tune the school action plan to identify more precisely how progress will be monitored and evaluated.

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

External support

The support from the LA is well tailored to the school's priorities and includes elements of support and challenge to senior leaders and staff. This is helping to develop the quality of the school's plans, strengthen middle leadership and improve the teaching of phonics.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood
Her Majesty's Inspector