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23 April 2013

Mrs Valerie Fowles
Headteacher
Gleadless Primary School
Hollinsend Road
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S12 2EJ

Dear Mrs Fowles

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Gleadless Primary School, Sheffield

Following my visit to your school on 22 April 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. A telephone conversation was held with the Assistant Director (Learning and Achievement Service) from the local authority. The school's raising attainment plan, minutes of governors meetings and other documents were evaluated. The headteacher took HMI on a tour of the school to look at teaching and learning.

Context

The deputy headteacher left the school at the end of the spring term. As a result, the senior team have been re-organised with internal appointments; they took up their posts on 1 April 2013. Three new governors have been appointed.

Main findings

The raising attainment plan lacks precision and has no measurable targets at regular intervals so that the impact of different programmes and initiatives can be assessed against improvements in pupils' progress. Although senior leaders want to see improvements, the detail in this document is insufficiently sharp. The new members of the senior team demonstrate a keen interest in their roles but they have been in post for insufficient time for their work to have an impact. Consequently they do not know what is working well and why it is making a difference.

The minutes of governors' meetings show that governors are involved in all aspects of the school's work. Questioning is detailed and governors are looking to see if the money they provide for additional resources and materials are having the desired impact. Too often, the information they receive is anecdotal and not ground in evidence. This is because leaders' mistake how well pupils are doing compared to other pupils nationally with the progress individual pupils make in relation to their capabilities.

Senior leaders are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection because the plans to do so are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- improve the raising attainment plan to ensure it contains carefully considered actions and explicit success criteria with measurable targets at regular intervals
- make sure that leaders have a thorough understanding whether the actions taken are making a difference to the progress made by all pupils
- ensure that all leaders perform their roles effectively
- engage with local authority officers in an urgent review of provision so that the officers have first-hand knowledge of the school.

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

External support

The local authority has enabled leaders to make links with other primary schools in the area. It is, however, too early to judge the impact of this work. Since the January inspection, local authority officers have met with the headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body to discuss the quality of provision and whether improvements are taking place. Local authority officers have not observed teaching, looked at pupils' books or spoken to class teachers. An urgent review by the local authority officers, within the school, is planned to take place next month.

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

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young

Her Majesty's Inspector