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7 May 2013

Mrs J Vickers
Headteacher
Norfolk Park School
Park Grange Road
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S2 3QF

Dear Mrs Vickers

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

Following my visit to your school on 2 May 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, other senior leaders and representatives of the governing body and the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated and a scrutiny of pupils' progress files was undertaken. A monitoring walk to check the school's progress in developing classroom equipment and resources was also undertaken.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection which judged the school to require improvement, an acting assistant headteacher has relinquished her role and has returned to classroom teaching. The deputy headteacher is undertaking a secondment of two terms at another school, and one teacher is absent and temporary teachers are teaching the class. The Chair of Governors has relinquished the role and the Vice Chair is covering the role temporarily. A new business manager has been appointed to the school.

Main findings

The headteacher has realigned school plans. Actions are focused on all of the areas identified in the recent inspection. The headteacher has put in place a programme of staff training to clarify expectations of teaching and pupils' progress. As a result, teachers' assessments of pupils' starting points and what they can and cannot do are becoming sharper. This has led to very clear learning targets for pupils. Across the school staff are adopting the same systems to record pupils' progress. Scrutiny of pupils' work and progress files during this visit showed that some staff are collecting and recording very specific evidence of pupils' achievements and there are signs that pupils' knowledge and skills are developing systematically. However, this is not secure across the school. Further work by senior leaders to identify the reasons for this, and tackle them, have yet to be undertaken.

Further funding to improve classroom resources has been identified by the headteacher and all staff are engaged in identifying what is needed. Poor resources have been replaced with those that are suited to children's needs: for example touch screen monitors, discrete outdoor play areas for each classroom and reading books that are attractively displayed at eye level with comfortable areas to sit and read. The headteacher is working with parents to develop a programme for children and families to access activities and resources during the forthcoming holiday period.

Clear roles and responsibilities have been established for the senior leadership team. A programme to monitor teaching quality and regular team meetings to share the findings are now in place. Senior leaders are beginning to identify good practice by teachers and teaching assistants.

Governors are receiving regular reports on the implementation of school plans. However, the lack of a clear timescale in these plans or detail about the intended impact of some actions mean they are less helpful in judging whether areas for improvement are being tackled successfully, on time and within budget. Training to assist governors in carrying out their roles and enabling them to hold the school to account has yet to be identified. The loss of the Chair of Governors has not helped to swiftly improve governance.

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:

- sharpen improvement planning by extending the plan to cover the 18 month period and strengthening the success criteria in the plan to assist governors in checking the impact that actions are intended to have on pupils' learning and progress.

HMI and the school discussed and agreed that the school will attend an Ofsted seminar later this term.

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

External support

Prior to the section 5 inspection the local authority required the school to work with a partner school, Kingfisher School in Oldham. Work with this school and with the local authority adviser helped Norfolk Park teachers to set clear learning targets for pupils and assisted senior leaders in confidently monitor teaching and learning. The local authority is urgently assisting the school to identify a replacement Chair of Governors with the intention of securing this change by September at the latest.

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

Gina White

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Vice Chair of the Governing Body
- Director of Children, Schools and Families - Sheffield Local authority
- the academy chain where relevant
- The lead inspector.