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17 May 2013

Mr J McGann
Headteacher
Woodthorpe Primary School
Summerfield Road
York
YO24 2RU

Dear Mr McGann

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

Following my visit to your school on 17 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 March 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, the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school action plan was evaluated and monitoring records were scrutinised.

Context

Since the inspection which judged the school to require improvement, there have been further changes in staffing. An acting headteacher from another school is temporarily leading the school during the planned absence of the headteacher. Two teachers, in Years 2 and the Early Years Foundation Stage, have left the school and temporary teachers are teaching the classes.

Main findings

Senior leaders and governors have taken swift action to tackle the issues following the recent inspection. They have realigned the school's strategic plans and developed a short-term plan with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and the impact it has on pupils' progress. The acting headteacher has started to make inroads into improving teachers' access to, and use of, assessment information. As a result the school is able to identify more quickly when pupils start to fall behind and diagnose what support they need. Senior leaders and governors are starting to use this to forecast where extra resources may be needed to support pupils' learning.

Additional focused programmes of intensive support are being implemented in all classes to help pupils, particularly the more able, catch-up in reading, writing and mathematics. This work is at an early stage. More frequent checking of pupils' progress and sampling of the quality of planning, teaching and pupils' books is taking place. Senior leaders, who were new to the school at the time of the inspection, are closely involved. They have a good understanding of where teachers are structuring lessons to better meet the needs and abilities of all pupils, but they also recognise where this is inconsistent. Monitoring records show that leaders are providing useful guidance to support individual teachers in reviewing and developing their practice in this respect.

The school's analysis of curriculum plans in all subjects has found further opportunities for pupils to apply mathematical problem-solving skills. The extent to which these opportunities consolidate and extend such skills has yet to be evaluated. Training to clarify and raise teachers' expectations of pupils' progress in mathematics is underway.

The school have moved quickly with existing plans. The acting headteacher and governors recognise that a longer term plan is required to increase the pace of the work they have started. Strategic changes, for example in the size of classes and some reorganisation to staffing, are well advanced in preparation for the next phase of development for September.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

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 arranged additional leadership support. They have continued to work closely with Woodthorpe to develop a partnership with nearby Westfield Primary School to extend support during the planned absence of the headteacher. Training, advice and support from specialist advisers in the local authority are part of an agreed plan to develop teaching this term.

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

Yours sincerely

Gina White

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Christine Johnston - Chair of the Governing Body
- Mr K Hall – York Local Authority
- The lead inspector.