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14 June 2013

Mrs Fran Bowman
Head of School
Clapgate Primary School
Cranmore Drive
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS10 4AW

Dear Mrs Bowman

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Clapgate Primary School, Leeds

Following my visit to your school on 13 June 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. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During my visit I met with you, the Executive Headteacher, the English and mathematics leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions being taken to improve the school. I also met a group of higher ability pupils from Key Stage 2 to discuss their learning and progress. Additionally I looked at work in some pupils' books and, together with the Executive Headteacher; we undertook a 'learning walk', focusing on the quality of teaching and learning.

Context

Since the last inspection there have been some significant changes to the leadership of the school and teaching staff. The governing body, in partnership with the Local Authority, has recently secured a permanent solution to the leadership of the school. The

school has become part of a collaboration with Westwood Primary School. The Headteacher of Westwood has been appointed as Executive Headteacher and the deputy headteacher is now Head of School at Clapgate. In the interim, the school has been managed by the retiring headteacher and another retired headteacher on a consultancy basis. Three new teachers have been appointed since the inspection. One member of the teaching staff is due to leave at the end of term and a new deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher have been appointed for September. Half of the teaching staff are newly qualified and recently qualified teachers.

Main findings

Staffing changes and other factors in the development of the school have meant that time has been lost in securing progress since the inspection. The new Executive Headteacher and Head of School have been in post for eight days. They recognise that there is much work to be done and have conveyed a sense of urgency for action to improve standards. They have very quickly, identified, a number of factors that are preventing pupils from making good progress. They are clear about what needs to be done to secure progress and recognise the importance of their leadership in driving forward these improvements. The pupils say that the new Head of School is already 'making changes for the better'.

Since the inspection, leadership has been unclear about how to improve teaching and learning and pupils' progress. Previously, leaders have made inaccurate judgments on teaching and learning and have not checked rigorously the accuracy of assessment data. For example, the action plan, outlines the key issues and actions with appropriate milestones, however, 'specific actions' are broad statements and do not detail how improvements will be brought about. When questioned, middle leaders were unclear about how they will specifically improve teaching and learning and accelerate pupils' progress. Recent evaluations about the quality of teaching and learning, based on lesson observations and the most recent data about pupils' progress, are over generous and do not measure the impact of teaching over time. The newly appointed Executive Headteacher and Head of School have undertaken a rigorous book scrutiny which challenges the wrongly held assumption that teaching and learning is good. There is no evidence in pupils' books to indicate the progress they should make. The book scrutiny and moderation of work with a local authority consultant also confirmed that the latest assessment data is inaccurate and some teachers are being over-generous when assessing pupils' work. The book scrutiny and learning walk we undertook during my visit confirmed this and showed that the level of attainment in each year group is still below what is expected.

As a result of their findings, the Executive Head and Head of School have drafted a new action plan that is clearer and more specific. They have responded to the issues raised in the inspection and their own recent monitoring work. As yet they have found it difficult to quantify progress because of the inaccurate data and evaluation of teaching and learning. They intend to make good use of the expertise from Westwood Primary School, other partner schools and the local authority to secure improvements. However, they need to be mindful that the plan needs to be presented in a form that allows governors and external partners to check progress and measure the impact of their actions on the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.

Governors and the Local Authority have taken the necessary steps to strengthen and secure leadership through the appointment of an experienced headteacher and deputy headteacher from Westwood Primary School. Prior to taking up post, both have been involved in the appointment of a new deputy headteacher and assistant head teacher for September. They recognise that there needs to be a review of the staffing structure and that there is a need to develop middle leaders so that they can also lead and support improvements. This is a key action for development.

The governing body has been strengthened through the appointment of an experienced Chair of Governors who has been instrumental in developing a structure that will allow governors to challenge and support the school on its journey to 'good'. Governors are beginning to receive appropriate training, such as the analysis of external data, so that they can provide the necessary challenge and check the progress of the school against the national and local context.

Senior leaders and governors are not yet taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- improve the new post-Ofsted action plan so that it relates directly to the issues raised, and allows governors to check progress in order to challenge and ask the necessary questions
- secure judgements on teaching and learning and assessment to provide an accurate baseline from which to set measurable targets for improvement
- train the governing body so that it has the knowledge and skills to check on the accuracy of information provided and question judgements
- strengthen leadership further by training middle leaders so they fully understand their role and have the skills and knowledge to lead and deliver the necessary improvements in teaching and learning
- ensure staff fully understand what good teaching looks like, in particular teaching over time
- review long term and medium term plans so that the curriculum in maths and English is appropriate to the needs of the pupils, ensures progression and allows pupils to apply skills and learning across the curriculum.

Ofsted will carry out a second visit in the autumn term to check on the school's progress and to provide further support and challenge. It will continue to do so until the school's next section 5 inspection.

External support

The Local Authority has been instrumental in securing the collaboration of Westwood Primary School with Clapgate to secure its journey to good. A consultant has supported the school to moderate assessments and has confirmed the new senior leaders' view that teachers are being over generous with their assessment of pupil achievement. Plans are in place to use a consultant to support improvements in the teaching of phonics and use

expertise from the partner school to support improvements in teaching and learning and middle leadership.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Bowyer

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following: