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20 June 2013

Mr Alan Littlehales
Headteacher
Morley Place Junior School
Old Road
Conisbrough
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN12 3LZ

Dear Mr Littlehales

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Morley Place Junior School, Doncaster

Following my visit with Tanya Harber Stuart Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 19 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 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 Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan and other documents provided, including a sample of pupils' work, were evaluated. The headteacher took HMI on a learning walk of the school.

Context

Two new teachers and two learning mentors are starting in September 2013. From September all classes will be taught in single year groups.

Main findings

Since the last inspection the school has tackled concerns about behaviour. Pupils and staff have been included in writing, and implementing, a new behaviour policy. This has reduced the number of incidents because there is a clearer link between behaviour and rewards.

There has been training for staff on phonics and on a reading test which the school is introducing. In addition there is a sharp focus on improving the presentation of pupils' work in their books. However, marking is inconsistent, and in some cases poor, and does not provide the pupils with information about how to improve their work. Often feedback is not acted upon and pupils continue to make the same mistakes.

There is an improvement plan in place but it lacks clear and measurable success criteria linked to pupil progress. A long list of actions are to be completed by the end of the summer term but there is little indication of what impact the actions will have. There is a lack of focus on improving day to day teaching. No monitoring and evaluation cycle is in place and it is not always clear who needs to do what, by when, and what impact their actions will have on pupil progress. The Chair of Governors and the local authority representative are aware of the shortcomings in the plan.

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

- re- write the improvement plan so that it has clear and measurable success criteria linked to pupil progress
- provide staff with effective opportunities to improve day to day teaching through training and observing good practice in other schools
- put into place a clear monitoring schedule which evaluates teaching, marking and the quality of pupils' work
- ensure action is taken to eradicate any inadequacies in teaching, marking and the quality of pupils' work.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. A visit is planned to scrutinise the revised improvement plan in July 2013.

External support

The Headteacher has established a link with a local primary school; however it is too early judge the impact of this joint working. The Chair of Governors and the local authority representative are keen to broker additional support from other schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Lane
Her Majesty's Inspector