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Mrs J Hussey
Headteacher
Scawsby Rosedale Primary School
Emley Drive
Scawsby
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN5 8RL

Dear Mrs Hussey

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Scawsby Rosedale Primary School, Doncaster

Following my visit to your school on 13 September 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 May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors 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:

- Make reading an added priority in the school improvement plan.
- Analyse the weaknesses in reading and writing more rigorously, in order to understand the reasons for slow progress, and to sharpen the actions to improve teaching and learning.
- Revise the school improvement plan to include the dates of professional development and monitoring and evaluation activities for the current school year, with milestones to measure the school's progress.
- Ensure that professional development plans for targeted teachers have timescales and dates to review improvement.
- Set up the proposed governor group to monitor school improvement more frequently. Carry out an external review of governance and provide training for governors in understanding data and questioning school performance.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated and documents recording the outcomes of monitoring activities were scrutinised.

Context

Two teachers left at the end of the summer term and three new teachers started in September 2013.

Main findings

Provisional results from the 2013 Key Stage 2 tests indicate that the steep decline in Year 6 pupils' achievement in 2012, highlighted in the recent inspection report, has not been arrested. It is likely that the school will fall below the government's current floor standard for 2013, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Although a stronger year group, the proportions that gained Level 4 or above in reading and mathematics were lower than in 2012. In 2012, Year 6 pupils made poor progress from their starting points at Key Stage 1. In 2013, their progress was weaker in reading and writing, and it remained weak in mathematics. At the time of the recent inspection, leaders were predicting better results in reading and mathematics than were achieved. Leaders have not carried out a question level analysis of pupils' test performance and they are currently unable to explain which aspects of reading and writing were weak.

Senior staff and governors are treating the inspection outcome as a wake-up call. The headteacher has a clear determination to make improvements and actions over the summer term made a start on improving the quality of teaching, the deployment of learning support assistants, the assessment of pupils' progress and marking. Leaders re-designed the pupil progress review meetings to focus more rigorously on underachieving pupils and the actions to accelerate progress. These meetings start in October. The role of learning support assistants has been clarified. A handbook has been produced for all staff and a revised appraisal system introduced. Leaders report a greater shared understanding and consistency in the deployment of additional support for learning.

Additional more-qualified staff have been appointed to improve the teaching of mathematics and extend the range of support strategies to tackle the weakness in number and calculation. Basic skills in mathematics have been identified more clearly in a 'maths passport' issued to every pupil. The literacy action plan has short-term plans for policies, resources and training but not enough on the weaknesses in reading and writing and how the school is going to tackle them and measure the impact.

The headteacher took the initiative to set up a partnership with a local leader of education at a neighbouring school. The focus of early support has been agreed and first visits have been made to support the development of two teachers. This is a promising relationship. Lesson observations have started to be conducted more rigorously with action plans for individual teachers to improve. These lack timescales for improvement and review dates.

The school improvement plan does not address the decline in the progress made in reading, evident in the recent Key stage 2 results. Leaders have not acted urgently enough to evaluate the weakness in reading and to make it a school priority. The aim of ensuring that all teaching is good by October 2013 is unrealistic and does not acknowledge the need for evidence of pupil progress to support this judgement. The school improvement plan details the actions that took place in the summer term and outlines actions for the autumn. The success criteria in the plan are not supported by milestones to demonstrate the steps in the school's progress. The plan lacks detail about the dates for professional development, the contribution of the partner school and monitoring and evaluation over the current school year. Much of this detail is in a calendar drawn up for senior leaders but it is not explicit enough to enable governors and external partners to monitor progress.

The governors recognise that the school needs to improve more rapidly. They have accepted contextual reasons for poor performance and have not looked critically enough at the weaknesses in teaching, learning and pupil progress. They were not aware that the school was unlikely to meet the national minimum expectations for attainment and progress in 2013. They have themselves suggested that a small group should meet more frequently to monitor and question leaders more closely. This proposal has not yet been agreed. Governors understand the need to sharpen the focus of their questioning. Members of the governing body have not had training in these areas. They suggested that a review may be helpful in enabling them to work more effectively to support and challenge the school.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority provided advice on school planning, helpful advice on improving monitoring and evaluation procedures and useful information about good practice in marking. Plans are in place for the local authority and school leaders to clarify the role of the additional resource centre for young pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties.

The partner school has begun to provide useful support for improving teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell

Her Majesty's Inspector