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Mrs Satadru Ashton
Headteacher
Byron Wood Primary School
Earldom Road
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S4 7EJ

Dear Mrs Ashton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Byron Wood Primary School, Sheffield

Following my visit to your school on 27 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 June 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- develop the improvement plan so that it contains clear success criteria and milestones which can be monitored and evaluated by senior leaders and governors
- devise a process by which governors can monitor the impact of the actions taken by senior leaders to address the areas for improvement.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plans and other documents provided by the school were evaluated. The headteacher took HMI on a tour of the school.

Context

There are eight new members of staff, seven of whom are teachers and one a higher level teaching assistant. Four of the teachers are employed on one year contracts. The leadership team has been restructured. There are now two permanent and two temporary assistant headteachers. A new layer of higher level teaching assistants has been included in the staffing structure to support the rapid integration of new arrivals into the school.

Main findings

There is an improvement plan underpinned by plans for each subject area and phase of the school. The plans address the areas for improvement appropriately but lack numerical success criteria and milestones. These need to be included so that the impact of actions taken can be monitored. Details of the way in which support programmes are provided to develop teachers also need to be added.

There is a focus on improved lesson planning with weekly monitoring of teachers' plans by senior leaders. Marking and feedback are being developed so that the school's policy is used consistently. Monitoring of marking shows that there is an improvement this term. Teachers report that the improved feedback is motivating pupils.

A new reading scheme, linked to rewards, devised by the school is having a positive impact. Pupils are excited about reading the new books and keen to share their reading with adults. A re-launch of the 'big write', which ensures that pupils write independently, and training in sentence structure and grammar for teachers and teaching assistants are improving writing.

There are plans to address underachievement at Key Stage 2. Additional teachers in Year 5 and Year 6 provide targeted interventions for those who are not meeting their targets and for high attainers. Key groups in Year 6 are having extra literacy and mathematics sessions before and after school. Pupils attend these sessions enthusiastically.

The capacity of the leadership has been significantly increased by providing considerable time for the assistant headteachers to undertake monitoring, support and challenge. Monitoring and evaluation is better. There is a calendar which includes regular opportunities for checking teachers' planning and marking, and lesson observations. Assessment processes are improving as a result of training for staff in the use of the Sheffield pupil progress tracker, half termly data collection and progress meetings with teachers. Teachers whose practice is not yet good have personalised support plans and there are a range of professional development opportunities.

Governors who met HMI are frequent and supportive visitors to the school, working alongside pupils in the classroom. They recognise the impact of improvements in marking and feedback. A review of governance is planned and two new governors need to be recruited who are able to commit time to supporting and challenging school. Governors should consider an appropriate way of monitoring the impact of the actions taken to improve 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. HMI plans to return to the school in December to monitor the consistency and impact of improvement

External support

The Headteacher has brokered the support of a local outstanding school to help develop teaching and learning. An education consultancy is providing support for the leadership team, including a review of teaching and learning in the spring term 2014.

The local authority is starting to develop a partnership with the school. They will carry out a teaching and learning review in November 2013 and hold regular monitoring and progress meetings with schools judged to require improvement. The local authority representative agreed to support the school in finding additional governors who can add to the capacity to support and challenge the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Lane

Her Majesty's Inspector