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30 September 2013

Ms Devane
Headteacher
Shire Oak CE (VC) Primary School
Wood Lane
Headingley
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS6 2DT

Dear Ms Devane

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Shire Oak CE (VC) Primary School, Leeds

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 July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

- agree measurable milestones to enable the school's progress towards 'good' to be monitored robustly
- review whole-school targets to ensure they provide the degree of challenge needed to secure good achievement
- ensure the evaluation of pupils' progress takes account of the proportions meeting and exceeding expectations relative to their starting points.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, a group of staff and the Chair of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority and had a tour of the school with two Year 6 pupils. The school development plan was evaluated and other documents were scrutinised, for example, the outcomes of recent monitoring activities and data relating to pupils' attainment and progress.

Context

In September, a new deputy headteacher joined the school along with a part-time teacher who has been appointed to focus specifically on improving pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour.

Main findings

Governors, staff, other leaders and you were disappointed with the inspection outcome. Nevertheless, all those involved with the school have responded positively and show a strong commitment to securing rapid improvement. The appointment of a deputy headteacher after a period with no-one in this role has increased the capacity of your senior team to tackle areas for development quickly. The school development plan incorporates the improvement areas identified at the recent inspection and you and your leadership team were already fully aware that these were key priorities for the school. Some targets in the plan lack precision and in other cases do not provide sufficient challenge, particularly for the proportion of pupils who will reach the highest levels by the end of Key Stage 2. The absence of measurable milestones makes it more difficult to assess in the short term whether the school is on course to secure the improvement needed to be judged 'good'. The school is closely monitoring the progress of different groups and checks carefully whether pupils are on track to make the progress expected. Data summaries to support the school's evaluation of pupils' achievement incorporate too little information about the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress relative to their starting points.

Action to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in mathematics has continued apace. Staff value the opportunities they have to plan together, carry out peer observations and then reflect jointly on their teaching and confirm this is helping to improve their practice. Whole staff training has been well received and is increasing the consistency of the teaching of calculation across the school. New assessment materials and the analysis of pupils' responses to tests are allowing staff to identify gaps in pupils' understanding and skills more accurately. This information is being used more effectively to inform whole class teaching and small group or one-to-one interventions so gaps are being successfully addressed. Monitoring of the impact of work to improve mathematics is thorough and frequent. The swift feedback to staff ensures they are very aware of the improvements secured and where more development is needed.

Your consultative approach to exploring the views and concerns of all staff about pupils' behaviour has been greatly appreciated. The subsequent collaborative development of the behaviour policy has, as one member of staff described, ensured 'everyone is on the same page'. The 'respect' week has actively promoted positive behaviour and this, combined with more consistent behaviour management by staff has already brought about improvements in pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Further targeted work has begun with a specific class and some individuals but it is too soon for its impact to be seen.

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

You have found the local authority support valuable and well matched to the school's priorities. Your staff are making good use of opportunities to work collaboratively with other local schools to share good practice and improve their teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority - including where the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- < Diocese - for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk] - for academies