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Mrs Tracy Watson
Headteacher
Overfields Primary School
Daisy Lane
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TS7 9LF

Dear Mrs Watson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Overfields Primary School, Redcar and Cleveland

Following my visit to your school on 1 October 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 taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- make sure that there is greater clarity as to which members of the school staff and, governors, will check that sufficient progress is being made towards becoming a good school. Include clear milestone points to measure your progress over the next 18-24 months.
- ensure that when checking on the improvements being made to teaching this includes checking on the progress of all groups of pupils and how their progress measures up against outcomes nationally.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team and five teachers. I also met with two governors and two representatives from the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I undertook a tour of the school with you and we made brief visits in to lessons along with an evaluation of some of your lesson observation documents.

Context

Two teachers and one teaching assistant have left the school since the time of the inspection.

Main findings

It is clear that you have not wasted any time in starting to plan and take action to make the improvements that are needed in order for the school to be judged good. You have made some changes to the staffing structure by moving some teachers in to different year groups. This has already started to show some improvements to pupils' progress particularly in Years 1 and 3.

You and your staff, with the support of the local authority, have developed a working improvement plan that clearly aims to address each of the key areas for improvement raised during the recent inspection in May 2013. However, to further sharpen the plan's potential to help drive rapid improvement you need to ensure that it is clear about who will be checking the impact of the actions identified in the plan and how this will be done, including the role governors can play. The plan would benefit from having some longer term milestones against which to check future progress.

You and senior members of staff have quickly started to develop a coaching programme for teachers to start sharing good practice more effectively with the intention of improving the progress of all pupils. Other improvement activities include the careful reviewing of pupils' books to assess their progress, and observing lessons more frequently to check that progress is more rapid. You have started to develop ways of making teachers more accountable for the progress their pupils make by scheduling half termly one-to-one meetings with teachers to check whether pupils' progress is fast enough.

All of this recent activity has helped give you a clearer picture of the areas where further work and effort is needed. These areas include making sure that there are daily structured opportunities for pupils to develop their writing and to continue to improve teachers' planning so that lessons meet the needs of all pupils including those who are more able.

You have also started to introduce a new performance management process. You and your senior leaders have a clear understanding that judgements made about teaching should be closely linked to the rates of pupil progress over time and not just a snap shot in any one lesson observed. These raised expectations are being built in to teachers' performance management targets and the intention is to hold teachers more accountable for the progress pupils make in their classes.

Teachers and governors I spoke with agreed that they wanted to see their school improve quickly and become at least good. They recognise and accept the reasons why the school requires improvement and are working hard and with clear purpose to make the necessary improvements. The local authority is to provide, later this term, additional training for governors in how to balance support and challenge to the school. You have started to create a positive climate for change.

The school has started to work positively with a number of good schools both within and beyond its local cluster of schools. This has included specific mentoring for you as headteacher, as well as the increased sharing of good practice and practical resources to aid pupils' progress.

External support

The local authority is taking effective action so far to help the school begin to tackle the areas of its work that require improvement. The local authority has worked closely with the school in developing its action plan. Local authority officers have met with the headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body on a weekly basis following the inspection to monitor the school's progress. The local authority has brokered advisory support for the headteacher from the leader of a good local school; this support is valued.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector