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4 October 2013

Mr A Keane
Headteacher
Ripon, Greystone Community Primary School
Quarry Moor Lane Road
Ripon
North Yorkshire
HG4 1RW

Dear Mr Keane

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ripon, Greystone Community Primary School, North Yorkshire

Following my visit to your school on 3 October 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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:

- increase the governor representation on the school improvement committee in order to hold senior leaders to account and to ensure that momentum of improvement is maintained
- ensure that all actions designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning have clear outcomes that will enhance pupils' progress.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the assistant headteacher, the special educational needs co-ordinator, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plans were evaluated.

Context

Two newly qualified teachers took up their appointments at the beginning of September 2013.

Main findings

The school experienced a period of staffing instability before, during and immediately after the previous inspection. The headteacher demonstrated great fortitude in endeavouring to maintain effective teaching during this difficult time. Nonetheless, consistently good teaching and learning was not a feature of the school and this inhibited the drive to secure and embed improvements. It is now imperative that the senior leadership team and the governing body do not dwell on the past. They should put this experience behind them and focus on driving the improvements required with greater urgency and determination. The appointment of two permanent members of staff together with the impending return of two experienced teachers now presents a good opportunity to move forward.

The effective working relationship between the headteacher and the assistant headteacher has strengthened the capacity of senior leaders to bring about the developments required and this is evident in the changes that have taken place since the beginning of the autumn term. Teachers are focussing much more on ensuring that work is better matched to pupils' differing needs and abilities through identifying pupils' misconceptions during lessons. Class targets in respect of reading, writing and mental mathematics have been successfully introduced. Pupils talk confidently about their own targets and how they will help them improve their work.

Significant steps have been taken to enhance the progress of groups of pupils, particularly those eligible for the pupil premium and those with special educational needs. Initiatives include; daily individual reading sessions, intervention programmes regarding the application of basic mathematical operations and training for teachers and teaching assistants to deliver additional support effectively. School held data clearly suggest that these activities are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. However, there is still a lot of work to do, particularly in ensuring that pupils are provided with planned opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects and also in improving aspects of teaching so that pupils are more engaged in their learning. If pupils' achievement is to improve quickly then senior leaders and those with subject responsibilities must be very clear as to how all of the planned actions will make a difference to pupils' learning. At present this is not always apparent.

The governing body is more aware of the schools' strengths and weaknesses and is determined to be more knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The Chair of the Governing Body is in the process of arranging training from the local authority so that they are better able to check the work of the school

more rigorously. This is both necessary and timely because the pace of improvement will be dependent on how effectively the governing body holds leaders at all levels to account.

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 has provided valuable support to senior leaders in respect of planning for improvement and this will continue. The Education Improvement Adviser understands the needs of the school well and will continue to monitor progress. The local authority has proposed establishing a link with another governing body to see how they monitor and evaluate the work of the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Christopher Keeler

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