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Mrs Sheila Hauxwell
Headteacher
Beech Grove Primary School
Beechwood Avenue
Middlesbrough
North Yorkshire
TS4 3AP

Dear Mrs Hauxwell

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Beech Grove Primary School, Middlesbrough

Following my visit to your school on 9 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 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:

- ensure leaders take every opportunity to monitor, through regular lesson observation, the impact of teaching on achievement over time.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and team leaders, the parent support advisors, a representative from the local authority (school improvement partner) and the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body. A number of documents including records of monitoring activities and the academy's improvement plans were also evaluated.

Context

Since the previous inspection, two teachers, including one supply teacher, have joined the school. In total, two classes are currently taught by supply staff.

Main findings

In a relatively short period of time, school leaders have worked hard to implement a number of key actions indicated on the school's development plan. For example, to improve the teaching of reading across the school, there has been a full audit of teachers' skills linked to focused training, followed by a number of lesson observations to monitor improvements. Further actions include a review of the school's library facilities to give greater access to pupils, developing further the work of the reading enrichment assistants in supporting targeted pupils, and a review of the English curriculum, including the introduction of 'story time' and the study of whole books to encourage a wider enjoyment of reading.

Leaders have also raised the profile of attendance with pupils and with the local community. The school no longer authorises term-time holidays and parents have been made aware of the financial penalties if their children do not attend school. Focused assemblies and rewards, including attendance cups for pupils, have also been introduced. The school has also recently employed a part-time education welfare officer to work alongside the school's parent support advisers. This work is already making a difference with improvements already evident in the school's attendance and persistent absence figures.

The school's new leadership structure augurs well for securing further improvement. Frequent team meetings ensure that pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are discussed on a regular basis. To date, leaders have closely monitored pupils' workbooks and teachers' marking and planning. The quality of teaching has also been reviewed by an external consultant. However leaders recognise that a sharper focus on monitoring classroom practice through first-hand observation is now required to fully ensure that the quality of teaching is having the required impact on pupils' achievement over time.

Plans are in place for governors to receive further training next month on pupils' achievement data, including information on the 'school data dashboard' to ensure that they are fully able to challenge school leaders and raise key questions in relation to pupils' attainment and progress.

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

School leaders and governors value the work of the local authority, including that of the school improvement partner, and also the training opportunities available for governors. There are plans in place for the school to work with a specialist leader in education from a local partner school within the authority. However, despite considerable support since the opening of the school in 2011, the work of the local authority is yet to have a significant impact on pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and leadership over time.

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

Yours sincerely

Angela Headon
Her Majesty's Inspector