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Mrs D Bedford
Headteacher
Tadcaster East Community Primary School
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Dear Mrs Bedford

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Tadcaster East Community Primary School, North Yorkshire

Following my visit to your school on 15 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- ensure all staff consistently plan lessons to meet the needs of all pupils, have high expectations of all learners and take effective action during lessons to maximise pupils' learning and progress
- ensure that regular checks in lessons are focused on the impact teaching has on the learning and progress of different groups of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics
- keep governors fully informed and involved so that they have an accurate view of the impact of the school's work to raise standards and quicken pupils' progress, and are better able to hold staff to account.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. Six joint lesson observations were undertaken and the school's records of monitoring and evaluation of teaching were sampled. School data, reports to governors and minutes from governors meetings were scrutinised.

Main findings

Despite much activity to improve teaching in the eight months since the school was inspected, pupils continue to make slow progress particularly in Key Stage 2 classes in writing and mathematics. Test results for 2013 and the latest school data reflect this picture: over a third of Year 6 pupils who left the school in summer 2013 did not make the minimum progress expected in reading, writing and mathematics during Key Stage 2.

Pupils show interest in the work they are set and are keen to learn. They listened well to teachers in lessons and followed instructions. However, the pace of learning in lessons is slow. Teachers do not always plan effectively to promote pupils' progress. This is because information and assessment data is not used well enough to ensure that lessons are adapted to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. 'Steps to success', a feature in many lessons, focus on the tasks pupils are going to do, rather than what they are expected to learn. As a result, pupils are not always clear about what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson or how to ensure their work is of the highest quality. Opportunities are not used well enough during lessons to check pupils' understanding and identify when they are ready to move on to more challenging work.

Recent improvements in the analysis and reporting of school data are enabling leaders to grasp the extent of the task ahead of them. Governors have responded to training well. They understand their responsibilities, are starting to adopt a more challenging approach, and are rightly beginning to question the reasons for the lack of pace. However, leaders do not always have enough detailed information to answer governors' probing questions. Checks on the quality of teaching by the headteacher and deputy headteacher have focused on supporting weaker practice. Records show some improvements to individual teacher's practice but monitoring does not focus sufficiently on the impact that teaching is having on pupils' learning. The difference between the optimistic picture presented by leaders and pupils' slow progress and low attainment reflected in the school's data are stark.

Leadership is not sufficiently developed throughout the school to provide further insights into strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance in specific subjects. Local authority advice and support is compensating for this current lack of capacity in the school. Leaders are now more informed about where to focus their efforts to improve reading and writing. School plans, updated since September, reflect this

advice. Additional actions show a more structured approach to teaching grammar in Key Stage 2, and further work to support more able readers and provide better feedback to help pupils to improve their writing. New approaches introduced to support the teaching of mathematics are yet to impact on pupils' achievement.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. HMI will return to the school next term to carry out a further monitoring visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to meet with the full governing body to review teaching and the monitoring of its impact on pupils' learning.

External support

External support from the local authority has not resulted in significant changes to the overall quality of teaching in the last eight months, but that provided for governance is beginning to take effect. Since September, the local authority has provided intensive support to the school to help leaders to tackle the weaknesses revealed in pupils' attainment and progress data. More regular checks by local authority officers are required to ensure that training is implemented fully and to make certain that support is tailored precisely to the school's emerging needs.

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

Yours sincerely

Gina White

Her Majesty's Inspector