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16 October 2013

Amanda Ireland
Headteacher
Scargill Junior School
Mungo Park Road
Rainham
RM13 7PL

Dear Ms Ireland

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Scargill Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 16 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 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:

- ensure that recommendations from the external review of the governing body are fully incorporated into the school's action plan and quickly implemented.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated your school action plan, achievement data and your record of the monitoring of teaching. I visited classes in all year groups.

Context

Since the last inspection two newly qualified teachers have been appointed. The deputy headteacher and special educational needs coordinator have been allocated additional time to carry out their leadership responsibilities.

Main findings

The headteacher has wasted no time in taking action to address the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. The school's action plan identifies appropriate milestones to measure the impact of actions and accountabilities of staff are clearly stated. Timescales demonstrate a sense of urgency. There is an unstinting expectation from the headteacher and senior leaders that all teachers must strive for improvement. Teachers are responsive to these higher expectations and welcome the increased rigour. The quality of teaching is already improving, as a result.

Roles and responsibilities within the leadership team have been refined and there is now greater capacity to drive changes more securely. Since the beginning of term all teachers have been observed through a 'drop-in' process. All have received written feedback. Where there have been strengths, these are recognised and used to inform improvements in practice for all teachers. Where there are actions needed to improve the quality of teaching, these are clearly identified and quickly followed up.

In their planning all teachers are expected to identify clearly how tasks, resources and activities have been matched to the different abilities of pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the most able. Importantly, there is a sharper focus on the use of assessment data, so that the link between planning, teaching and pupils' achievement can be carefully tracked. Senior leaders check the quality of planning weekly. They evaluate the impact of this planning by visiting classrooms, to observe the progress of pupils.

The school has closely analysed 2013 achievement data. Tracking systems are well-developed and teachers benefit from clearly presented data about pupil progress. More ambitious targets have been set for the achievement of pupils. Leaders are clear that while achievement has risen in 2013, notably in mathematics, they have more to do to ensure that all pupils are making the best progress they can. Their analysis accurately identifies where there has been a slight dip in pupils' attainment in reading and some variability of pupil progress in Year 5. This close and specific analysis is being used to target groups of pupils and to put into place appropriate interventions to accelerate their progress.

The headteacher has established a more robust system for collecting evidence about the impact of teaching on achievement. Data, together with regular book scrutinies

and classroom visits, are being used to evaluate teachers' performance. In the relatively short space of time since the last inspection, there has been a range of evidence gathered to assess the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.

Governors are strongly committed to ensuring that the school continues to improve. Although they know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well, they are not making full use of all the data available to evaluate the impact of teaching on achievement. They ask some challenging questions, but are aware that they need to provide further challenge to the school's leaders. A full review of governance will take place during November 2013, along with a skills audit to identify governors' training needs. All are aware that the recommendations of this review need to be included in the school's action plan, so that the pace of improvement is rapid and closely linked to securing greater accountability from senior leaders.

External support

The school has received effective support from the local authority. The school's link advisor has provided support and challenge to the headteacher. The link adviser has undertaken an analysis of performance, which has been used to identify appropriate support and to sharpen the school's development priorities. External consultants have visited the school to advise how the teaching of mathematics can be improved. This has already enabled teachers to develop their skills and to use a broader range of teaching resources and strategies to engage pupils and speed up their progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Russell Bennett
Her Majesty's Inspector