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8 November 2013

Mrs Louise Dale
Headteacher
Sandal Primary School
West Lane
Baildon
Shipley
West Yorkshire
BD17 5DH

Dear Mrs Dale

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Sandal Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 7 November 2013 I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and findings of the inspection. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in January 2013. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is not making enough progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Strategic Director – Children's Services for Bradford.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Guy
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2013

- Improve the quality of teaching in mathematics in Years 1 to 6, so that it is at least good by ensuring that:
 - work is closely matched to pupils' needs so that all are able to make consistently good progress
 - more effective use is made of lesson time to enable pupils to learn quickly
 - pupils are given precise information about how they can improve
 - help from support staff is always of good quality.

- Raise achievement in mathematics by ensuring that:
 - teachers receive training to enable them to have a good understanding of how to teach mathematics and develop pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects
 - pupils are given significantly more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills to solve problems and to understand the relevance of mathematics to everyday life
 - teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in mathematics are accurate so that pupils who are falling behind in their learning can be quickly identified and supported
 - pupils who find learning more difficult and those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable are given additional, good quality help to ensure that they make good progress.

- Improve the quality of leadership, management and governance by ensuring that:
 - checks on the quality of teaching in mathematics are more rigorous and accurate
 - there is strong and effective leadership of mathematics
 - the school's evaluation of its performance is more accurate and improvement plans are more sharply focused on raising pupils' achievement and improving the quality of teaching in mathematics.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 7 November 2013

Evidence

The inspector met with the headteacher, three members of the governing body, senior leaders, subject leaders in mathematics and English, and a representative of the local authority. Observations of teaching and learning in Key Stages 1 and 2 were conducted jointly with the headteacher. Documentation relating to the school's work and governance were scrutinised.

Context

A new headteacher began in September 2013. Since the previous monitoring inspection two newly qualified teachers have started at the school, the acting head of school has reverted to her post as deputy headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher has remained in this role. The acting assistant headteacher and another member of staff have resigned and will be leaving at Christmas 2013. Two teachers are currently on long-term absence. A new parent governor has been elected to the governing body which has also appointed a new Vice-Chair.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The new headteacher has secured an accurate and honest view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This view is shared by leaders at all levels, the governing body and the local authority.

Standards in the end of key stage assessments have risen due to some stronger teaching. However, the majority of this stronger teaching is in Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is not enough good teaching in Key Stage 2 to enable these pupils to make the progress they are capable of.

Teachers' performance was not formally reviewed in the summer term as planned. The new headteacher has begun a new cycle of appraisals, although the setting of objectives for all teachers is not complete. Delays in this process have hampered action to address the weaknesses that remain in teaching in Key Stage 2. Together with the changes in staffing and leadership, this has led to a stalling in the progress of the school. Consequently, weaknesses in teaching in Key Stage 2 persist and, as a result, pupils' progress continues to be too slow.

Information about pupils' progress since the last inspection shows pupils are not making the progress they should. The gaps in the progress made by different groups of pupils, such as pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, remain too wide in some year groups. Too often the needs of pupils with special educational needs are not catered for. Work is not set at the correct level and the support they receive does not enable them to make better progress. Leaders have analysed which pupils need additional support and have begun a series of interventions and booster

groups to accelerate their progress, however, it is too early to judge the impact of these as they are newly in place.

Issues relating to pupils' progress and teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics identified at the last inspection, though improved in Key Stage 1, still persist, particularly in Key Stage 2. In addition to these, leaders have identified that pupils' achievement in reading needs to accelerate more rapidly. Teachers have received training in strategies to develop guided reading. Although some teachers are moving forward with this, progress is inconsistent because of weaknesses in teaching.

The clerk appointed to support governors' meetings has ensured that the challenge given, and questions asked, by governors are carefully recorded. This has meant governors are able to maintain a close eye on what is happening and the pace of improvement. Similarly, the committees established by governors have resulted in a clearer focus on what is being done to improve. Governors and leaders accept there is an urgent need to see greater impact of leaders' actions on pupils' progress if the school is to accelerate its progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- The new headteacher has an accurate and incisive view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She has communicated this view to leaders and governors who share her determination to address the issues.
- Results from end of key stage assessments show improvements in outcomes for those pupils in Year 6, Year 2 and the Reception Year in the summer of 2013.
- Leaders are clear about the improvements required and have begun to implement strategies to address them.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Arrangements for performance management have not been established quickly. Consequently, action to eradicate the weakest teaching has been too slow.
- The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 remains an area of concern and is impeding pupils' better progress.
- There are still too many inconsistencies in approaches to learning and teaching across the school. Issues identified at the last monitoring inspection still persist and are impeding better progress. In particular:
 - weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge persist. This continues to result in work being given to pupils which does not build precisely on what they have learned or address gaps and misconceptions in their learning
 - in the marking of pupils' work, there remain too many cases where teachers' comments are not making an effective contribution to pupils' better progress

- in ensuring lessons and activities are accurately matched to pupils' individual needs, there are still too many lessons where all pupils are given the same activity without consideration of their different learning needs.
- Although leaders have appropriate plans to bring about improvement, they need to follow up on agreed actions and insist these are implemented effectively and with greater urgency.

External support

With the changes in leadership have come some changes in the range of partnerships and external consultants the school is working with. While these new partnerships are well aligned with the needs of the school and address the correct priorities, this has added to the delay in accelerating the school's progress.