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28 November 2013

Mr Martin Moss  
Headteacher  
Whiteways Primary School  
Whiteways Road  
Sheffield  
South Yorkshire  
S4 8EX

Dear Mr Moss

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Whiteways Primary School, Sheffield**

Following my visit to your school on 27 November 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 September 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:

- Improve the school action plan:
  - so it has clear milestones which enable senior leaders and governors to monitor the impact of actions to improve the school
  - so it extends at least until the end of the school year.
- Embed the improvements in teaching and learning so more is good or better
- Provide middle leaders with opportunities to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in their area.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan and other documents provided by the school were evaluated. The headteacher took HMI on a tour of the school.

## **Context**

Since the inspection a new Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body have been elected. A member of staff has taken on leadership of literacy.

## **Main findings**

Since the inspection the headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders has addressed the areas for improvement with appropriate actions, some of which are showing an impact. The action plan has success criteria and useful evaluation questions for governors to ask. However the plan lacks milestones to help senior leaders and governors monitor the impact of actions for improvement. The plan needs to be extended so that it covers the full school year.

Regular assessment points at six weekly intervals mean that senior and middle leaders know which pupils are not making sufficient progress and can identify extra help for them. The data is shared at progress meetings attended by each teacher together with their Key Stage leader and the deputy head teacher. This is a rigorous and consistent approach in which next steps to improve progress are identified.

There has been a focus on better planning. There is a new planning format and an expectation that assessment data is used to help plan lessons which meet the needs of all pupils, as well as challenging the most able. Planning is regularly checked by senior leaders who provide key points for improvement which are discussed with the teachers. Planning is improving.

There is a clear marking and feedback policy. In books pupils are told what they have done well and how to do even better. The policy is not yet consistently used but where it is used well it is helping pupils to make more rapid progress. Senior and middle leaders are checking marking through regular work scrutiny and good practice has been shared by teachers looking at each other's books in a staff meeting. During the visit many of the books seen showed opportunities for extended writing and high expectations of pupils' work. Pupils' attitudes to learning reflect these high expectations.

There has been training in teaching both phonics and reading. Phonics teaching is now more effective and teachers who are less confident are given support by school leaders to improve their practice. Pupils are taking part in weekly mathematics investigations.

The senior leadership team have a very good understanding of the profile of teaching and learning across the school. Some teaching and learning is good and the impact of actions taken to improve teaching and learning can be seen in the classroom. Where teaching and learning is not yet good, bespoke packages of support, personalised to the needs of the teacher, are provided by senior leaders. Very effective use is made of modelling good

practice and coaching to help teachers improve. These packages are having a positive impact. Teachers are starting to share good practice on an informal basis.

The profile of middle leaders has been raised. Modelling and coaching are helping them to understand the strengths and weaknesses of planning and marking and feedback in their areas. The progress meetings mean that they are focussed on improving achievement for all their pupils. The impact of this is starting to be seen in more rapid progress of pupils and better leadership. Middle leaders now need opportunities to observe teaching and learning in their area of the school.

Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school as well as the challenges faced. They have a strategic group to monitor the impact of actions taken to improve the school. A review of governance has recently been undertaken and the outcomes will be discussed at the next governing body meeting. The Chair of the Governing Body has carried out an audit of governors' skills and believes the skills are appropriate to move the school forward. The governors have reviewed the impact of spending of pupil premium funding and this will be available on a new website in January.

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 is providing strong and regular support for leaders and governors and the local authority representative is part of the strategic group monitoring the action plan. She has brokered a useful partnership with a local school.

The headteacher has made good use of two consultants who have validated the monitoring of senior leaders and the early impact of improvements. The headteacher is involved in a range of partnerships both locally and in other local authorities which are helping school improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Lane

**Her Majesty's Inspector**