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Mrs Naomi Cartledge
Headteacher
Corrie Primary and Nursery School
Cemetery Road
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Manchester
Lancashire
M34 6FG

Dear Mrs Cartledge

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Corrie Primary and Nursery School, Tameside

Following my visit to your school on 19 December 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 October 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 all staff are challenging the most able students in all year groups, in order for them to make the best possible progress
- form an interim strategic group of governors to work alongside senior leaders and play a key role in driving forward improvements at a rapid pace across the school.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and other senior leaders, the Chair and three other members of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and two groups of students. I evaluated the school action plan and scrutinised other key documentation. I also had the opportunity to accompany you on a tour of the school.

Context

You have made two new appointments who will take up their posts in January 2014. The new teacher in Year 1 will have a leadership responsibility for teaching and learning in Key Stage 1. The new assistant head teacher will share the teaching of Year 3 with another senior leader.

Main findings

You acknowledge that the recent inspection judgement was an accurate reflection of your school. Your action plan focuses closely on the areas for improvement which were highlighted in the inspection report. It gives a detailed account of actions and intended impact, but it is not always clear who is responsible for leading, monitoring and evaluating these specific actions.

We discussed the need for all leaders in school to ensure that the improvement journey moves forward at a fast enough pace over the coming months and how important it is for everyone to share that sense of urgency. The assistant headteacher is leading on many of the current initiatives in school and you need to consider how this responsibility can be more effectively distributed across the whole of your leadership team.

You track pupils' progress against aspirational targets every half-term and ensure teacher assessment is accurate through robust moderation procedures. This data is used effectively to identify those pupils who require extra help to make the best possible progress. The most recent data shows a significant increase in the levels of progress which the Year 6 pupils are making compared to this time last year. Pupils throughout the school who are supported by the pupil premium funding are generally making as good, or better progress than their peers.

You believe that the 'assertive mentoring' procedures which you have been using since the recent inspection are contributing to this improvement. This view is supported by the pupils themselves. The Key Stage 2 pupils I spoke to during my visit could explain very clearly how this was helping them to improve, particularly the weekly 'big maths' lessons which they were all very positive about.

In order to meet the need of the most able in mathematics a tutor from Manchester Metropolitan University works with pupils aiming for Level 5 and 6. However, although a new initiative on lesson planning is helping teachers to challenge the most able pupils, this is having variable impact across the school. This is borne out by the comments of some Year 3 pupils who felt their work was too easy. One pupil said, 'I would like to be pushed more to get better levels.' We discussed how important it was that teachers' planning is focused on moving all pupils' learning forward to enable them to make the best possible progress.

There is some evidence that the new marking policy is making a difference, although you know there is still some variability in how staff are following it. Book scrutinies reveal that some teachers need to give more time for pupils to respond to their comments in order to make improvements in their work. It is clear that senior leaders are monitoring this and giving feedback to staff on this issue.

Governors are committed and are aware of the job which is ahead of them in the coming months. The Chair of Governors described the recent inspection as a 'wake-up call.' She has carried out a skills audit and made it very clear that there is an expectation that all governors will do the required training. The current committee structure is not enabling the governing body to focus effectively on the key priorities for the school. Following a discussion with the Chair and members of the governing body, I suggested that creating an interim strategic group would be the most effective way for them to play a key part in driving improvements forward at a rapid pace as the school moves towards its next inspection.

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 has been closely involved with the school since September. The local authority officer linked to the school has helped you with your action plan and discussed key priorities. In January she will be doing a series of joint observations with you and other senior leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Seneviratne

Her Majesty's Inspector