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13 December 2013

Mr D Carruthers
Headteacher
Martongate Primary School
Martongate
Bridlington
YO16 6YD

Dear Mr Carruthers

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Martongate Primary School, Bridlington

Following my visit to your school on 13 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.

Evidence

During the visit, discussions were held with you and other school leaders, the Chair of the governing body and a local authority representative. I spoke to pupils, and examined school documents, such as the school's development plan, monitoring records of teaching and your latest progress data. I also observed teaching and learning in the 14 classes in the school.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, a teacher has been absent through illness.

Main findings

The school's leaders, including governors, now recognise that they have not previously been efficient, effective or decisive enough in strategically driving the school's improvement. The headteacher in particular accepts that had he been more timely and proactive in adopting a culture of the highest expectations, greater accountability and more rigour in monitoring, evaluating and developing the quality of teaching, the curriculum and the assessment and tracking of pupil progress, the school would have begun to improve more quickly, sooner. This realisation and local authority intervention has focused the minds and actions of the school's leaders and there is unequivocal evidence that the school, ably assisted by some key partners has taken some effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement

identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Staff, including senior leaders, know the stakes are high and are responding positively to the new regime in place. They have embraced the training, mentoring and coaching they are receiving to improve the impact of their work. Middle leaders have been empowered and are more actively involved in checking the quality of teaching in their areas and supporting senior leaders to raise standards. The school has sensible plans for improvement with measureable success criteria and clear lines of accountability for monitoring and securing the targets.

During the inspection, some improvements were seen in: the level of challenge pupils were subject to and how well pupils understood what was expected of them and what they were going to learn; the opportunities pupils had to write at length and for a variety of purposes; and the extent to which the learning resources provided actually aided pupils' learning. The school's monitoring of teaching and their latest data indicates that teaching has improved across the school and pupils are making faster progress as a consequence. Inspection findings agree to an extent but there remains a number of inconsistencies in practice that need to be ironed out. Teacher's impact is not yet consistently high in every classroom which is reflected in some inconsistent performance for certain groups of pupils. The school acknowledges this and also realise that the initial success they have had in accelerating pupils' progress must be capitalised upon and converted into good or better achievement over time if the school is to move its effectiveness to good by the time of the re-inspection.

The governing body has received the same 'wake-up call' given to the headteacher and now see they were not holding leaders sufficiently to account. Whilst the external review of governance has not taken place yet, links have been established and work is underway to re-shape the committee structure and align it more closely with the school's key priorities. Governors have had training from the local authority on interpreting school performance data and how to challenge senior leaders more robustly. Governors know the challenges facing the school and have a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

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 school has received some intensive support from the local authority, particularly around teaching, tracking pupil progress and the efficiency of leadership. This has been necessary as the school's overall effectiveness has been stubbornly less than good over time. The local authority's persistence and additional challenge has facilitated sharper practice in the school which to an extent underpins the improvements in the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils evident more recently. The local authority has brokered support to the school from a local leader of education, who is helping to improve leadership efficiency. The local authority is also monitoring and evaluating the school's progress in tackling its key priorities.

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

Yours sincerely

John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector