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16 December 2013

Mrs Lesley Wardman  
Acting Headteacher  
Armthorpe Tranmoor Primary School  
Tranmoor Lane  
Armthorpe  
Doncaster  
South Yorkshire  
DN3 3DB

Dear Mrs Wardman

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Armthorpe Tranmoor Primary School, Doncaster**

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.

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:

- embed the improvements in teaching and learning so that they are consistently good or outstanding
- ensure that all pupils, especially boys make rapid progress.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the acting headteacher, other senior leaders, and members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and the headteacher who is supporting the school to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan and other documents provided by the school were evaluated. The acting headteacher took HMI on a tour of the school.

## Main findings

The senior leadership team, supported by the headteacher from a local school, have acted with drive and determination to address the areas for improvement. Following a forensic analysis to determine the school's position they have written a strong action plan which has detailed success criteria linked to milestones. The milestones make it easy for senior leaders and governors to monitor the impact of actions taken to improve the school. The plan is backed up by a separate milestones document for the progress in each class and a monitoring cycle. The progress milestones are used to hold teachers to account for the progress of their pupils and to identify pupils who need extra help. The monitoring cycle enables leaders to check the improvements made through dropping in to lessons, formal lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and analysis of pupil progress. The strength of the school's cycle of development, training and monitoring is in the repetition which ensures that new ideas are regularly returned to.

Appropriate professional development opportunities are planned for teachers and teaching assistants. This is already leading to better questioning, improvements in marking and feedback and in reading. Teachers have undertaken self-evaluation to identify their own development needs and these form part of their performance review. They have a performance objective linked to the areas for improvement. The headteacher who is supporting the school has provided training about inspirational teaching ideas. These are being used to engage learners, for example Year 3 have built their own coal mining museum for which the information is provided through electronic 'QR' codes.

Senior leaders have a clear view of where there are good and weaker aspects of teaching and learning. They are helping teachers to improve their practice through individual programmes which both support and challenge. Teachers have opportunities to observe good practice within the school and in other local schools. These programmes are clearly time limited to ensure rapid improvement.

There has rightly been a focus on reading. The literacy coordinators are leading improvements in reading with enormous energy and enthusiasm. They have visited other schools to observe good practice. They have adapted this practice for their own classrooms before modelling them for other teachers. The reading routines for the week have been redesigned to ensure that activities are more engaging and have a purpose. New technologies are being used to encourage boys to read, as well as links with football clubs. Links with home have been strengthened through reading diaries. There has been a reading week with a focus on the use of the local library.

Marking and feedback have improved. Teachers are using 'how now' marking to provide useful steps for pupils to respond to marking (how) and time for them to respond (now). Evidence of this was seen during the tour of the school. Pupils are responding to feedback in green pen in an appropriate way which encourages better progress. All of the pupils who were asked were able to explain why they were doing so. This now needs to be used consistently.

During the tour of the school the activities seen were planned to meet the needs of all learners no matter what their starting points. This was supporting the learning and progress of many pupils but is also an improvement which needs to be used consistently. Detailed progress data shows good progress in many classes, however the progress of boys is a concern in some years.

The senior leaders have acted as a positive and cohesive force to improve the school and have encouraged staff to develop with them. They are well supported and challenged by the governing body. Governors are monitoring the impact of the actions taken to improve the school on a regular basis through the 'joint review group'. They ask challenging questions which demonstrate their high expectations.

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 brokered the support of a headteacher from the Doncaster Teaching Alliance and the local authority representative is providing additional challenge at the joint review group. The headteacher from the support school is offering very strong strategic and practical support to the senior leadership team in moving the school forward at a fast pace.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Lane

**Her Majesty's Inspector**