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Mrs Linda Joseph
Headteacher
Springfield Primary School
Broomspring Lane
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S10 2FA

Dear Mrs Joseph

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Springfield Primary School, Sheffield

Following my visit to your school on 15 January 2014, 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 the evaluation of the impact of actions taken to improve the school can be measured numerically in all of the school's action plans so senior leaders and governors can monitor the improvements accurately.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the acting headteacher, other senior leaders, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plans and other documentation provided by the school were evaluated. Senior leaders took HMI on a tour of the school.

Context

A new teacher started in January 2014 which has enabled a colleague to join the senior leadership team on a temporary part-time basis. Another new teacher will start in February 2014 with responsibility for the curriculum.

There have been 37 new arrivals in the school since September 2013 which represents 23% of the school roll.

Main findings

The acting headteacher, well supported by the acting deputy headteacher, has galvanised school improvement and engendered a team approach in which all staff are working together towards a vision that the school will become good. The action plan clearly identifies what needs to be done; with milestones linked to success criteria; however the evaluation of the impact of the improvements is too descriptive and needs to be quantifiable.

Swift action has been taken to begin to improve teaching and learning. Staff visited a partner school and have shared the good practice of that school in the development of learning walls. These were seen during the visit and are a visually stimulating display which provides interactive resources for learning, particularly in English and mathematics. They are helping to widen pupils' vocabulary and their understanding of words. Some teachers have been supported to develop their practice by observing lessons at the partner school. Observations of teaching and learning before and after this opportunity demonstrate that teaching and learning has improved. The new member of the senior leadership team is using coaching and mentoring, personalised to individual teachers, to drive improvement across the school. This includes a cycle of joint planning, team teaching and review. It is at an early stage but provides a strong model for improving teaching and learning so more is good or outstanding.

Marking and feedback are improving. There is an updated marking policy and regular work scrutiny. This demonstrates that teachers are providing useful feedback which pupils are responding to. Pupils understand this process well.

A good range of professional development is planned and on-going both in school and through external courses. The training in school is led by a range of staff encouraging team working and joint ownership of school improvement. Training is currently being used to identify and develop resources to help the less able and those new to English to understand their work. There is a focus on the development of reading. Teachers in some year groups are involved in half-termly moderation with colleagues from other schools. The good practice has been adopted across the school.

Data is collected half-termly and senior leaders have a good understanding of how well different groups of pupils are progressing. Class teachers are completing a very helpful pupil attainment form which ensures they know which of their pupils are doing well and who needs extra help. This information is shared with senior leaders at progress meetings. The acting headteacher has half-termly meetings with a consultant who verifies her judgements about attainment and achievement. The school offers a wide range of extra help for pupils including a pupil premium worker, booster sessions and art therapy. Teaching assistants have been reorganised so they provide consistent support to classes and use their specialisms to enhance the progress of pupils.

Leadership and management have improved. Sensible plans are in place to add capacity to the leadership team who are new to their roles. As well as the promotion of a teacher to develop teaching and learning, and the appointment of a new leader for the whole school curriculum, two consultants are working with the school. One meets the acting headteacher half-termly to review pupil progress. The other is working at the school two days each week with a focus on monitoring and evaluating all aspects of teaching and learning. The acting headteacher has driven the development of the curriculum by giving each teacher a curriculum area to lead. They have produced action plans and are liaising with other schools. This work is monitored through performance management.

Governors have a clear understanding about what needs to be done to improve the school and are collecting first hand evidence to monitor the impact of actions taken to address the areas for improvement. Following proposals from the acting headteacher they acted quickly to add capacity to the leadership team through the appointment of new leaders and consultants. They have started the recruitment process for a permanent headteacher.

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 holds termly performance and impact meetings with the acting headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body to monitor and challenge the school. The authority has provided important financial support to allow the appointment of the consultants who are supporting and developing senior leaders. The school was working with a National Leader of Education and her school until December 2014 to develop teaching and learning and support leaders. The school is part of a 'triad' of good schools in the locality which provide a range of opportunities to develop teaching and learning.

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