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17 January 2014

Mrs Julia Brown
Headteacher
Greenhill Primary School
Greenhill Main Road
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S8 7RA

Dear Mrs Brown

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

Following my visit to your school on 16 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:

- Make links with a good or better school to enhance the development of new and existing leaders.
- Speed up improvements to mathematics, especially in Year 3/4 by making sure teachers offer consistent challenge when pupils are tackling independent tasks.
- Tweak the school improvement planning to make it clear who is responsible for checking particular aspects.
- Make sure leaders' monitoring pays attention to the detail of pupils' learning.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meeting with you and other senior leaders, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement and action plans. I also made two tours of the school accompanied by senior leaders during which we made a series of brief lesson visits. I checked the schools' single central record.

Context

There are currently four members of staff, including the deputy headteacher, on long term leave of absence. Three middle leaders have taken on the duties of the deputy headteacher during her absence.

Main findings

The school has got off to a sound start in improving teaching. Leaders have established systems of supporting teachers and they are developing a system of coaching. Consequently, teachers are giving pupils tasks which help them work things out for themselves. However, there are times when teachers do not spot quickly enough when pupils have chosen an option that is too easy for them and offer further challenge.

The most marked success has been in the way teachers are consistently using the new 'tickled pink' and 'green for growth' marking. Pupils are getting regular chances to look at the comments teachers have written about their work and respond. This is giving pupils a clearer idea of what they need to do next to improve their work.

Improvement in mathematics is not happening as rapidly as it could because there are still some instances where teachers' planning lacks detail. For example, there are times when simple mistakes in pupils' books are not picked up quickly enough and occasionally there are errors in worksheets.

Leaders have made progress in adapting the school's improvement plan to quickly address the areas for improvement highlighted at the last inspection. It is based on the right priorities and it is clearer who has responsibility and what success will look like. However, it is not detailed enough about who and when actions will be checked. The new leadership team are quickly getting to grips with their new responsibilities. However, they do not always focus sharply enough on the progress pupils are making. The school have not yet secured effective links with another school to ensure they see effective practice elsewhere.

The school are continuing to participate in a national programme for school improvement but it is still too soon to evaluate the impact of this. However, leaders have used the programme to plan how they can use the checks they do on the quality of pupils work and teaching to secure faster improvement. The renewed focus on making sure pupils make better than expected progress is bringing an added edge to regular meetings between leaders and teachers.

Governors are getting better at offering challenge to senior leaders. They regularly visit the school and these visits are becoming more sharply focussed on the areas the school needs to improve. They know what the pupil premium funding is spent on but they did not establish what they expected success to look like from the outset. This makes it difficult for them to check the impact of this work.

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

External support from the local authority has been appropriate. In particular it has conducted a review of the schools' progress and works with the headteacher and Chair of Governors to establish what needs to be done next. The national improvement programme has offered leaders regular coaching and access to professional development. Consequently new leaders are establishing themselves quickly in their monitoring role.

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

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt

Her Majesty's Inspector