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Miss Kate Prior
Headteacher
Southroyd Primary and Nursery School
Littlemoor Crescent
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LS28 8AT

Dear Miss Prior

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Southroyd Primary and Nursery School, Leeds

Following my visit to your school on 5 February 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 November 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:

- refine the five priorities in the action plan to remove overlap and improve clarity
- ensure measurable success criteria and milestones for pupils' attainment and progress are agreed and incorporated into the action plan.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school's action plans were evaluated. I toured the school with two pupils and scrutinised a number of documents, including data relating to pupils' current attainment and progress.

Context

One teacher retired in December 2013 and another class teacher will leave at February half-term.

Main findings

While you, your leadership team and the Governing Body expected the 'requires improvement' judgement you were all, nonetheless, disappointed. However, because you and your leadership team were largely aware of the areas for improvement identified in the section 5 inspection, action to address them was already well underway. Subsequent work to unpick in more detail reasons for pupil progress and teacher performance being less than good has been valuable in helping to inform the content of action plans. Additional senior leadership capacity in place since September 2013 is helping the school to tackle priorities quickly. All staff are committed to bringing about rapid improvement in pupils' progress and developing their classroom practice. All teachers have quickly developed their understanding of the pupil progress needed during a year if their overall achievement by the end of Key Stage is to be good relative to their starting points. Current data indicate the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2014 is set to rise because progress is improving.

A wide range of strategies are being used to improve achievement in mathematics. The subject has a much higher profile across the school with increased curriculum time and 'immersion days' that enable to pupils to master a particular concept or basic mathematical skill. Pupils have more frequent opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in a range of different subject contexts and through playing mathematical games or attending extra-curricular clubs. Teachers are becoming more adept at identifying pupils' misconceptions and are addressing these more quickly and effectively. In addition, extra staffing is enabling more pupils to benefit from small group and one-to-one support. Staff meetings have been used well to develop teachers' understanding and confidence in teaching calculation skills. A planned whole-school training day focusing on the teaching of mathematics has been brought forward reflecting the urgency with which this priority is being addressed.

Marking and the quality of written feedback to pupils about how to improve has developed significantly. Pupils also are being given more time to respond to teacher comments or prompts so are able to consolidate or extend their understanding or skills more effectively.

The school's action plan is very detailed with five priorities identified from the two main areas for improvement in the section 5 report. This has resulted in some overlap between the different priorities. While milestones for improving the quality of teaching are clearly set out, those for improvements in pupils' attainment and progress are less precise. This makes it more difficult to monitor precisely the impact of actions and whether pupils' achievement is securely on track towards being judged 'good'.

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

While your initial plans for an external support partnership did not come to fruition, you have worked closely with the local authority to broker partnerships within the local 'family of schools' and external providers to support whole-school professional development activities and additional classroom expertise. For example, these partnerships are being used effectively to enable staff to see good and outstanding practice first-hand with partner

teachers carefully chosen to maximise the impact of peer observations and post-lesson discussions. The increase in local authority support is helping to accelerate the school's improvement. The recently established Joint Review Group with representation from the authority, governors and school leaders is well placed to monitor progress robustly.

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

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli
Her Majesty's Inspector