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Mr Paul Burgess
Dunston Primary and Nursery School
Dunston Lane
Newbold
Chesterfield
S41 8EY

Dear Mr Burgess

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Dunston Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 12th February 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in November 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, the acting Chair and another representative of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated.

Context

There have been no important changes to staffing since the section 5 inspection, but the permanent posts of two staff who are on maternity leave, and one other on leave of absence, are currently being covered by temporary staff.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

The leaders and governors of the school, with support from the local authority, have responded promptly and robustly to the judgements of the recent inspection. They are taking appropriate action to address the points for improvement identified in that

last report. Senior leaders know where improvement is required and are building on the actions which were already in hand at the time of the previous inspection to improve outcomes for pupils. Senior leaders are working rigorously to ensure that all teaching is at least good and that all pupils make the maximum progress and attain the highest standards they can. For example, they are promoting writing across the school in the same way that has been successful with reading, and are investing additional resources and staffing in the teaching of mathematics. All staff are being supported in making better use of assessment information in order to help identify, and maximise, the progress of all pupils. Regular pupil progress reviews are providing an accurate understanding of the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. Regular monitoring, in conjunction with the local authority, is also helping to check the impact of actions to bring about improvement. Evidence from the monitoring of pupils' performance already indicates, for example, that pupils in Year 6 are now making significantly better progress this year.

The local authority knows the school well and is committed to its development. Significant resources are being provided to underpin the actions being taken. These include brokering links with a successful local school to give further support to the leadership team, staff and the governing body at Dunston. With support from the local authority, the governing body has increased the number of governors and the balance of expertise within the governing body. Governors have undertaken a carefully planned training programme including training in the use of assessment data. As a result governors are increasingly well informed and fully aware of their responsibilities in helping to lead the school out of serious weaknesses. They are now directly involved in the monitoring and evaluation of specific priorities for improvement.

The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan are aligned to ensure that actions by both parties are fully coordinated. Actions, and the outcomes of those actions, are carefully and coherently planned against the areas for improvement identified in the Ofsted section 5 report. The actions to be taken by the school and local authority are well integrated and both plans are comprehensive, detailed and provide clear and cogent objectives and targets to drive the improvements needed. The targets are challenging but achievable. The associated outcomes and criteria for measuring the success of the actions being taken are sufficiently precise and measurable. Both plans identify clear timelines and milestones, enabling all parties to monitor progress and the success of actions effectively. The timescale for both plans, however, cover only this academic year rather than the full timeframe of the category of concern.

Following the inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's action plan is fit for purpose

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the acting Chair of the Governing Body, and the Strategic Director for Children and Younger Adults for Derbyshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Terry Holland
Additional Inspector