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Mrs Alison Carrick
Headteacher
Victoria Primary School
Ivy Avenue
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS9 9ER

Dear Mrs Carrick

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Victoria Primary School, Leeds

Following my visit to your school on 26 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:

- accelerate the pace of improvement and ensure all staff and governors understand the extent of improvement required to be judged good
- ensure action with individual staff to improve their teaching to at least good is taken quickly
- refine the use of data relating to pupils' attainment and progress so that all leaders, staff and governors have an accurate view of the school's performance relative to the national picture
- sharpen success criteria and milestones in the school's improvement plan so that progress towards 'good' achievement can be monitored more effectively
- quickly improve the skills of governors so they are more rigorous in their monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders and a group of staff to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also spoke with a representative of the local authority and two members of the governing body over the telephone. I toured the school with a group of pupils. The school improvement plan was evaluated and a range of documents were scrutinised.

Context

A new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed shortly after the section 5 inspection.

Main findings

You and your leadership team along with the governing body were disappointed with the inspection outcome but accept that, despite improvements in a number of areas, pupils' achievement overall is not good. In part this is because, over time, the pace of improvement, for example, in raising standards in mathematics, has not been fast enough. There is, however, a shared determination across the school to bring about the improvements necessary quickly. You and your staff have unpicked in detail the strengths and weaknesses identified in the section 5 inspection report and put in place suitable plans to tackle the areas for development. However, some success criteria and milestones are too imprecise because measurable targets for pupils' progress and attainment that would represent good achievement are not fully identified.

Better communication within the school and increased time for staff to work together in both phase teams and as a whole is valued. These opportunities to develop and share good practice are beginning to have an impact on improving the quality of teaching. In addition, specific training for teachers and support staff is also helping to make teaching more effective. More account is being taken of the needs of different groups of pupils and greater thought is being given as to how additional adults will be used to support learning effectively. Work to improve the quality and consistency of teachers' marking has also already had an impact. Pupils are getting clearer guidance on how to improve their work and are increasingly responding to teacher comments to move their learning on. However, more urgency is required to ensure the development needs of individual staff are identified and addressed so that all teaching is at least good. Outdoor provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is beginning to be improved.

Leaders with responsibility for reading, writing and mathematics are increasingly driving improvement in their respective areas. Links with a partner school are helping them to develop their leadership skills and enabling them to see other strategies and approaches that they can use to help raise standards and improve teaching. The role and development of phase leaders in supporting improvement is not as well defined. Teachers are being held to account more robustly for the performance of pupils and there is a stronger focus on identifying and supporting pupils who are falling behind. Data relating to pupils' attainment and progress are extensive and some staff reported they feel this is, at times, overwhelming. Governors rightly recognise that further training will enable them to fulfil their roles more effectively.

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 link with another primary school, brokered by the local authority, is proving beneficial in supporting the development of your middle leaders. For example, they are being more systematic in their monitoring of the quality of provision. While there is scope for this school to offer further support, such as, hosting teacher visits to see good practice, the development of other partnerships could be helpful in enhancing the role of phase leaders. Not all local authority support requested has been provided in a timely way.

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