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Mrs Alison Hitchen
Headteacher
Bradleys Both Community Primary School
Skipton Road
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West Yorkshire
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Dear Mrs Hitchen

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bradleys Both Community Primary School, North Yorkshire

Following my visit to your school on 4 March 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 December 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are starting to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- improve the school plan so that it is clear what impact actions will have on rates of pupil progress and who will check for evidence of impact
- ensure that there is a more coherent and effective system for tracking rates of pupil progress as well as attainment
- ensure that as a result of the skills audit of the newly formed governing body, an effective plan of support and training is quickly put in place to help governors challenge and support the school to become at least good within the next 18-24 months.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and two subject leaders. I met with two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken prior to and since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan and other monitoring evidence including pupil progress data, performance management targets and lesson observation documents. In addition, I undertook a brief tour of the school with you and we visited some lessons.

Context

Since the inspection in December there is a new Year5/6 teacher who is covering a long term absence.

Main findings

In the words of one staff member, the findings from the recent inspection have, “been a wake-up call” to the fact that the school is no longer outstanding and needs to be at least good within the next 18-24 months. As interim headteacher, you have helped all staff come to terms with this fact and have started to address a number of the areas for improvement.

During your relatively short time as interim headteacher you have sensibly focused on a small number of key priorities rather than trying to tackle everything at once. Actions are focused on improving classroom practice and in particular pupils’ behaviour for learning and ensuring all pupils are challenged in lessons, especially the most able. There are now agreed non-negotiable standards for how teachers provide consistent marking and feedback to pupils along with how teachers go about planning their lessons.

You have sensibly reduced your teaching commitment so that you can focus more of your time checking all staff comply with these expectations. You have begun to regularly check the quality of teaching through regular visits to lessons and checking the quality of marking and teachers’ planning. Your weekly monitoring is starting to show that there are some early signs of impact. Staff are starting to see that pupils being compliant is not the same as pupils demonstrating positive attitudes to learning and being fully engaged in their learning.

The school improvement plan is directly linked to addressing the key areas for improvement that were identified in the most recent inspection. It is a short term plan that is intended to make a start on tackling the areas for improvement. A revised plan with longer timescales will be written prior to the substantive headteacher starting in April. The current plan lacks important details and needs amending. There needs to be greater reference to how planned actions will have a positive and measurable impact on pupils’ progress and it is clear how and by whom this will be checked.

You along with senior staff readily accept that further work is needed to make the tracking and monitoring of pupils’ progress more effective as a tool to improve achievement over time. There are currently a number of different systems being developed by staff to help achieve this. However the emerging systems lack an overall coherence and make it difficult

for staff and governors to quickly and clearly judge the rates of progress groups of pupils are making over time.

The governing body has taken steps to overhaul systems and structures of governance and is in the process of being reconstituted after having gone through some turbulence. There is currently a small "core" of governors in place. Governors recognise the need to play a more prominent role in checking the impact of school actions on pupil progress. A skills audit of governors, including newly appointed ones, will inform future training and support that governors need in order to accurately check that the school is on track to become at least good within the next 18-24 months.

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 has provided valuable support during what has been a turbulent time for the school. The Educational Development Adviser has made frequent visits to support the governors' in reconstituting, appointing a substantive headteacher and supporting them in setting up a Parents Forum. Effective support has also been provided for the interim headteacher in accurately evaluating the quality of teaching. The local authority has also signposted where effective practice can be found in other local schools including Carleton and Asquith Primary Schools. This has particularly helped support teachers in Early Years to begin to improve their tracking of pupils' progress and the interim headteacher in evaluating the progress the school is making.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector