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25 March 2014

Mrs Ruth Bessant  
Headteacher  
Wath Victoria Primary School  
Sandymount Road  
Wath-upon-Dearne  
Rotherham  
South Yorkshire  
S63 7AD

Dear Mrs Bessant

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wath Victoria Primary School, Rotherham**

Following my visit to your school on 24 March 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings. 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 taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- clarify the medium and long term plans for the development of the academy and the contribution that the partnership with other schools will make to improving teaching, behaviour, attendance and achievement.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, representatives of the Interim Executive Board, representatives of the academy trust, Steel City Schools Partnership, and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the action taken

since the last inspection. The school's raising achievement action plan and the headteacher's reports were scrutinised.

## **Context**

Prior to the last inspection the school was in special measures. The school will become an academy sponsored by the Steel City Schools Partnership. This was due to take place on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014 but has been delayed. The current headteacher has been appointed as principal of the academy. The governing body for the academy has been appointed. Members of Interim Executive Board and a director from the academy trust are members of the new governing body. Plans are in place to build a new school. The future of the Children's Centre, managed by the Interim Executive Board, is under review. In January 2014, a new Year 3 teacher took up post.

## **Main findings**

The school is at a point of transition in its leadership and governance. Preparations for the transition to academy status are on track but are delayed by the complications involved in resolving legal matters. First steps have been taken to establish the schools' new relationship with the academy trust. The headteacher has had a first meeting with the executive principal and principals of other schools within the trust. Plans are in place for regular meetings of deputy principals. The vice-principal of the trust has taken responsibility for managing the formal transition of the school to academy status and has outline plans for sharing expertise and resources that may benefit the school.

The school's raising achievement plan is limited to actions for the current term. The process of transition is not sufficiently advanced for the trust to have produced written plans of how it will contribute to strategies for improving teaching, behaviour, attendance and achievement in the medium or long term.

Leaders report that actions to improve the quality of teaching are having some impact. A new appointment has strengthened teaching in Year 3. Coaching for two newly qualified teachers has helped them to develop their confidence in the classroom and their skills in organising learning. A teacher appointed in September is having a positive impact on the teaching of letters and sounds and as a result pupils at Key Stage 1 are making better progress in reading than in previous years. A new programme run by a teaching assistant is helping pupils to catch up on basic skills in sounding and blending. There has been some improvement in teaching requiring improvement, helped by professional development from the partner academy. Some teaching continues to receive support.

Since the recent inspection, leaders have continued to focus on enhancing the skill of teachers to make more precise use of objectives and success criteria and to assess and meet individual needs more accurately, especially of lower ability pupils, including those with special educational needs. The aims of in-service training have been to improve expertise in matching work to the needs of different abilities and in

setting practical short-term targets to improve pupils' skills in English and mathematics. The introduction of more formal appraisal for teaching assistants has begun to develop their role in making and recording assessments. Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' work have helped to improve consistency in the following areas: pupils' written work in mathematics; the use of mental mathematics; the amount of writing expected of pupils in Key Stage 1; and marking, including pupils' responses.

In Year 6, and other classes, booster sessions are helping to overcome gaps in previous learning. An early morning reading session has increased the numbers who read regularly and this is helping some pupils to make faster progress with their reading.

The school continues to deal with a few pupils with challenging behaviour. Since the recent inspection there has been one permanent exclusion and four fixed term exclusions for violent behaviour. Staff are continuing to share and develop their expertise in tailoring their strategies for managing the behaviour of particular pupils. Levels of attendance are just below the school target. Four children are subject to missing from education procedures.

Governors are well informed and bring useful expertise to the support and challenge they give the headteacher. The Chair of Governors is a national leader for governance. Governors' understanding of the impact of leaders' actions to improve reading and behaviour has been enhanced through their visits to classrooms. They have made a constructive contribution to planning the transition to academy status.

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 headteacher has drawn well on initial support and professional development offered by the academy trust. This is at an early stage of development. The headteacher has begun to use the expertise of the partner academy to plan ways of improving progress in writing in Year 5, to review the use of 'golden time', and to develop the wider curriculum. The local authority has supported the headteacher well through the process of the school becoming an academy. It has monitored the school appropriately and has encouraged the school to continue its participation in local learning networks.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Rotherham.

Yours sincerely  
Bernard Campbell

**Her Majesty's Inspector**