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20 March 2014

Mrs Karen Coker
Headteacher
Robert Shaw Primary and Nursery School
Southfield Road
Western Boulevard
Nottingham
NG8 3PL

Dear Mrs Coker

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Robert Shaw Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 19 March 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 January 2014. 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:

- improve systems to support newly qualified teachers (NQTs), by ensuring that they receive clear development targets which link to the Department for Education (DfE) Teacher Standards, and by ensuring that they receive a more structured programme of support from leaders, to meet their needs.
- ensure that the headteacher and representatives of the governing body attend a regional Ofsted 'Better Governance' conference, to support the further improvement of the skills of the governing body.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, your deputy headteacher and other leaders, two newly qualified teachers, and with representatives of the governing

body, including the Chair, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. The school development plan was evaluated, and a number of other documents were checked, including the outcomes of leaders' monitoring activities. You accompanied me on a tour of the school, which included brief visits to all classes, to observe pupils while they were learning.

Main findings

You have wasted no time in beginning to address the areas for improvement identified at the time of your last inspection. There is also a clear determination among staff and governors to work together to improve pupils' achievement.

Your strategies to drive improvement are outlined in a suitable school improvement plan, which has been revised since the last inspection. The plan includes clear timescales, and success criteria to enable leaders to gauge whether the actions you are taking are having enough impact. We discussed, during my visit, how the plan could be further improved. You agreed to improve the plan by identifying on it more clearly how the governing body can check the work of the school for themselves, rather than relying too heavily on reports received from members of staff. You agreed to submit your revised plan to me by the end of March 2014.

You are beginning to support the improvement of teaching quality within the school more effectively. This is being underpinned by your drawing up of individual plans for each teacher, which identify how they can improve their work. During my visit, we discussed how these plans could be further improved, by identifying on them more clearly whether any additional support or training would be required to help teachers to achieve their development targets. Your support for newly qualified teachers requires improvement. Although they attend relevant local authority training to help them to develop their skills, the development targets you have set for them do not link directly to the DfE Teachers Standards. Furthermore, the additional time they receive to develop their skills as newly qualified teachers is not monitored and supported effectively enough by senior leaders. We agreed that I would return to the school at a later date to check how effectively you have been able to address this issue.

There is a clear focus on improving the quality of pupils' writing in the school. For example, staff are providing more frequent opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their writing skills in different subjects, and spend focused time each day working with pupils to develop their grammar, spelling and punctuation skills. Displays of pupils' written work take pride of place in each classroom.

You are taking effective action to begin to promote the good behaviour of all pupils, particularly at break and lunch times. You are doing this by involving pupils in implementing a range of new, structured playground games and activities. You are also training pupils to support each other's emotional well-being more effectively.

You have provided clear direction to improve the school since the last inspection. Leaders, other than you, are beginning to become increasingly involved in checking and improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Their work is underpinned by monthly plans which make it clear to leaders what they are expected to do, and when. Since the last inspection, leaders have been active, for example, in checking the quality of marking in pupils' books. They have also observed a number of lessons with you, to improve their confidence and build their skills in observing colleagues at work. An effective tracking system is in place to enable leaders to check the progress of different groups of pupils across the school. You have used staff meeting time to support leaders to begin to improve their skills in analysing data about pupils' performance.

The governing body is beginning to build up a better understanding and knowledge of the school's work. For example, governors have made several visits to the school to check pupils' behaviour. Governors also arranged a meeting with parents and carers after the last inspection, which was well-attended; to gather their views and reassure parents and carers about the steps the school was taking to improve to become good or outstanding. During my visit, we discussed how governors now need to gather further evidence about the work of the school for themselves, to enable them to provide further challenge to you and your other leaders. We also discussed the benefits of you attending an Ofsted 'Better Governance' seminar, with representatives of the governing body.

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 effective support to the school since the last inspection. For example, through working with you to devise an appropriate improvement plan, and by providing additional support to the governing body. This has helped to improve the confidence of governors and their improved understanding of the next steps that need to be taken to improve the school. Appropriate support has also been received from a local teaching school alliance to help improve the quality of teaching, through the sharing of good practice.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Director of Children's Services for Nottingham local authority.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Spencer
Her Majesty's Inspector