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Mrs Joanne Grantham
Headteacher
William Levick Primary School
Smithy Croft
Dronfield Woodhouse
Dronfield
S18 8YB

Dear Mrs Grantham

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to William Levick Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 April 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 February 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:

- sharpen the post-Ofsted action plan by:
 - including additional, measurable success criteria so that governors can provide greater challenge
 - identifying the individuals responsible for checking and evaluating the actions taken.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, your deputy headteacher and three middle leaders. I also met with five members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. These meetings were held in order to discuss

the actions taken since the last inspection. I visited all classrooms and spoke with pupils informally. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's post-Ofsted action plan, the self-evaluation, information about pupils' progress, pupils' work and your records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching.

Context

Since the last section 5 inspection, there have been no contextual changes.

Main findings

You have taken concerted action to address the issues that were raised at the section 5 inspection. You are keen to ensure that you build staff confidence so that they are in a position to increase pupils' progress rapidly. The action plan addresses the issues from the inspection but does not include enough detailed criteria against which leaders will measure progress. Additionally, individuals responsible for monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions are not explicit.

Leaders have taken swift action to improve the quality of teaching through the introduction of focused, action plans for individual teachers. Since the inspection, you spend more time sampling pupils' work and supporting teachers informally in classrooms. Classroom monitoring is not always effective because your visits do not have a specific focus. The school's marking and feedback policy now incorporates a compulsory 'success checklist' and this ensures that all teachers allow time for children to review and improve their work. Whilst marking and presentation has improved, there is still variability in quality across year groups.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is now more established in her role and has responded quickly to a recent audit of this provision. As a result, a number of improvements have been made to the learning environment, including 'learning journeys', development walls and prompts to help children learn through play. All Key Stage 1 staff have received additional training in the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) to ensure greater consistency of delivery. Information provided by the school shows that achievement in phonics is improving.

Governors are highly supportive, know the school well and are aware that improving the quality of teaching is paramount. They immediately took decisive action to reduce the headteacher's teaching time so that she now has greater capacity to improve the overall quality of teaching in the school. Governors are more aware of activities that improve the quality of teaching, for example, they have observed leaders conducting a work scrutiny. They are not afraid to challenge leaders but their ability to monitor school improvement activities accurately is limited by the lack of measurable success criteria on the action plan.

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 adviser responds well to requests from the school. He has provided an increased level of support and has brokered a number of professional development opportunities from local good and outstanding schools. Staff are responding positively and this has already started to influence their own practice. He has also supported school leaders in checking, through moderation activities, that all school assessment data are accurate and match the quality of pupils' work.

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

Yours sincerely

Julia Wright
Her Majesty's Inspector