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7 May 2014

Mrs Wendy Edwards
Headteacher
Bankwood Primary school
Bankwood Close
Sheffield
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Dear Mrs Edwards

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bankwood Primary school, Sheffield

Following my visit to your school on 7 May 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 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:

- ensure that arrangements for checking on the impact of planned developments identify how, when and by who this will be done and also identifies the role of governors in evaluating the impact of planned improvements.
- ensure that an external evaluation of the use of the pupil premium is undertaken.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also met the headteacher of Oughtibridge Primary School, a national leader of education, who is working with the school to address the issues requiring improvement. I evaluated the post inspection action plan and looked at a range of evidence including information on pupils' progress, samples of pupils' work, the outcomes of monitoring activities and the minutes of governing body meetings. You accompanied me on a tour of the school, which included visiting all classrooms and sampling some pupils' work.

Context

Since the inspection in January 2014, one teacher has returned from a period of long term sickness absence and a new teacher has been recruited to teach a class in Key stage 1. One teacher resigned and did not return from maternity leave. One class is being taught by a long term supply teacher. Two new parent governors have been recruited and there is one vacancy.

Main findings

A post inspection action plan has been compiled to address all of the areas identified for improvement by the inspection in January 2014. Although this includes appropriate detail and how the impact of developments on classroom practice will be checked it does not identify when this will be done or always by whom. Senior leaders hoped to be part of a project to evaluate and refine the use of pupil premium funding but were not selected to take part. Consequently, the required external evaluation of how the pupil premium funding is used has not been commissioned. There is considerable evidence of the early impact of the school's work.

- Pupils' books show that the quality of marking and feedback is improving.
- Tracking of pupils' levels shows that progress and attainment are improving
- Teachers' understanding of their pupils' levels and rates of progress has developed further and teachers have begun to identify pupils who have not made as much progress as expected. Consequently, they have begun to plan what they will do to help these pupils make better progress.
- The evidence in your monitoring file shows that comments on teachers' performance, linked to the teacher standards, identify where improvements are being made. Underperformance is being challenged. However, written records of classroom observations do not always identify the impact of teaching on the learning of pupils in all lessons.
- Although middle leaders have received some training, and have a better understanding of their roles, the development of middle leaders remains a priority, particularly in terms of improving their skills at evaluating the impact of planned improvements.

Governors are clear about their role in both challenging and supporting the work of the school. They are aware of where improvements are being made and receive a good level of information about the impact of developments. However, the role of governors in checking and evaluating the implementation of the school improvement plan is not clearly indicated in the school development 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 headteacher and staff have been proactive in engaging with the headteacher and staff of Oughtibridge Primary School, a more effective school. Consequently, teachers report that they are now implementing a new approach to teaching guided reading and their expectations of what pupils can achieve have been raised. The local authority provides appropriate challenge and support through termly meetings to monitor progress and improvement and was instrumental in identifying a better performing school, which is now providing valuable support.

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

Yours sincerely

Amraz Ali

Her Majesty's Inspector