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10 July 2014

Mrs Jane Loader  
Headteacher  
Rainbow Forge Primary School  
Beighton Road  
Hackenthorpe  
Sheffield  
South Yorkshire  
S12 4LQ

Dear Mrs Loader

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Rainbow Forge Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 9 July 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in November 2013. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation. I recommend that the next inspection be a full section 5 inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Sheffield.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2013**

- Further improve the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2, so that it is at least consistently good or better by ensuring that:
  - all teachers ask more searching questions in order to deepen pupils' understanding of what they are learning about
  - all teachers maintain a good pace in lessons, so that pupils are continually engaged, stimulated and challenged throughout all parts of the lesson and to ensure their attitudes to learning are always good
  - in all subjects, all teachers insist that pupils always produce handwriting to the highest standards of which they are capable
  - marking always gives pupils detailed information about what they need to improve, how to do it and that they are given time to practise it again so that they can learn from their mistakes.
  
- Increase the proportion of pupils making expected and better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2, in order to raise standards to at least in line with the national average by the end of Year 6 by:
  - giving pupils more opportunities to read a wider range of different styles of text
  - ensuring all teachers focus on improving pupils' basic skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar in everything they write
  - ensuring all teachers identify any gaps in pupils' basic mathematical skills of number, calculation and place value, then checking to make sure that teaching has ensured these gaps have been eliminated
  - improving the provision for those pupils supported through the pupil premium so that it allows them to achieve well.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - putting in place more effective measures to reduce further the number of pupils whose attendance is low
  - developing the role of subject leaders in checking the quality of teaching so they can become more effective in evaluating the school's performance and raising pupils' achievement.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 9 July 2014**

### **Evidence**

The inspector met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, the executive headteacher of Birley Learning Community Cooperative Trust, and a representative from the local authority. The inspector carried out joint observations of teaching with the headteacher, considered data about attainment and progress and examined pupils' work in books.

### **Context**

The deputy headteacher, seconded from another school, will leave at the end of the summer term. The new deputy headteacher took up post in May. Extra classes in Years 1 and 2 will be provided to meet the September increase in pupil numbers. Three new teachers, two of whom are newly qualified teachers, and additional teaching assistants have been appointed. Two internal promotions have been made to lead inclusion and technology.

### **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

- The headteacher's well-focused plans, accurate evaluation and practical approach have strengthened the quality and consistency of teaching and learning.
- The well-structured, whole-school approach to teaching and learning is better established. Assessment at the beginning and end of each learning unit, and the identification of the stage that each pupil is at, are promoting faster progress across all year groups in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The transition from one deputy headteacher to another has been managed effectively. This has enabled the new deputy headteacher to quickly identify strengths and act on areas for development.
- Leaders of English and mathematics have used and developed their subject expertise well to improve the teaching of reading and writing and basic skills in mathematics.
- The recently appointed inclusion leader has developed her management skills in special educational needs and is keen to make better provision for underachieving pupils, including those eligible for support through the pupil premium.
- The leadership of attendance has improved and communication with parents is more effective. Issuing fines for unauthorised absence and more challenges and rewards for pupils have promoted attendance more strongly. The attendance leader has started to work with parents of children in the Early Years Foundation

Stage to make an earlier start to encouraging good attendance. Attendance is higher this year than last year.

- Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have developed a stronger understanding of teaching and learning through more regular visits and meetings with senior and middle leaders. Well-attended governor training and plans for fewer committee meetings are designed to increase governors' first-hand understanding of the school and to enable more of them to question leaders.

### **Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2, measured in terms of average points, rose in 2014. Although the current Year 6 had lower starting points than the previous Year 6, higher proportions gained Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics. For the first time, a few gained Level 6.
- In 2014, Year 6 pupils made better progress from Key Stage 1 in reading and writing. Their progress was better than the 2013 national average. Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium made better progress in all subjects and the gap between their progress and others in the school narrowed.
- A more systematic approach to the teaching of spelling contributed to a marked improvement in Year 6 test results in grammar, spelling and punctuation, although they remain below average.
- In all year groups and subjects, the progress made over the school year improved and was close to, or exceeded, expected progress.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development increased.
- Teachers are providing more stimulating and enjoyable lessons and are using questions more effectively to clarify and extend pupils' understanding.
- Pupils are beginning to have more varied challenges, and more choice and better access to reference sources, as a result of more innovative use of technology.
- Pupils use a wider range of texts for reading. Pupils are studying particular books and authors in more depth. More pupils are borrowing books from the local library. These developments have contributed to the pupils' improved progress in reading.
- Pupils' writing, handwriting and presentation have improved as a result of the more structured approach to the teaching of writing across the school. The earlier introduction of cursive script and a stronger emphasis on developing motor skills in writing have started to improve children's early writing skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

- A stronger focus on basic skills in mathematics has ensured that pupils have a better knowledge of times tables and are more confident in mental mathematics. A revised calculation policy for the new curriculum has been drafted and is about to be implemented.

### **Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- In 2014, attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 2 did not improve as much in mathematics as in reading and writing. In mathematics, progress from Key Stage 1 was less than the 2013 national average. Some pupils still have gaps in their basic skills and cannot securely apply their knowledge to different problems, particularly under test conditions.
- Changes to the grouping of pupils for letters and sounds, and some lack of experience in class teaching, resulted in fewer pupils in Years 1 and 2 reaching the required standard. Leaders have re-organised the groups so class teachers are more responsible and accountable for the progress pupils make in letters and sounds. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was a little lower in 2014 than in 2013.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development remains below the 2013 average for the 30% most deprived areas of England and Wales, particularly in literacy and mathematics.
- Action was not taken early enough in the year to tackle persistent absence. Plans are in place for earlier action in the next school year. There is no evidence so far that pupils are absent less often due to holidays in term time.

### **External Support**

- The wider locality group of schools has funded an English consultant who has made an effective contribution to improving the teaching of reading and writing in the school.
- The executive headteacher of Birley Learning Community Cooperative Trust contributes to the performance management of the headteacher. Arrangements for member schools to share data and to be accountable for their performance to the Trust have been agreed. Plans have been made to enrich wider aspects of provision including sports, enterprise and writing. Meetings to check the accuracy of assessment across different schools have been introduced. New links with the secondary school to compare assessments at the higher levels have been of particular value.
- The local authority has monitored the progress of the school appropriately.