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17 September 2014

Mrs Linda Wright
Headteacher
Riddlesden St Mary's CofE Primary School
Grange Road
Riddlesden
Keighley
West Yorkshire
BD20 5AB

Dear Mrs Wright

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Riddlesden St Mary's CofE Primary School, Bradford

Following my visit to your school on 16 September 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 March 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:

- bring greater urgency to improving the effectiveness of the governing body
- ensure the new leadership arrangements in the school build on the improvements already initiated and maintain the momentum that has been established
- include more detail about future developments in the school improvement plan, emphasising the progress that all pupils can be expected to make and include targets for pupils who can make better than expected progress.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, support staff, members of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, the collaborative headteacher who is supporting the school and a representative of the diocese to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

Since the last Section 5 inspection the headteacher has retired and a new leadership structure has been put in place. The governing body is being reconstituted. Significant changes in staffing have led to 4 new teachers starting in the school in September.

Main findings

You and your senior leaders have worked relentlessly to ensure systems and procedures are in place to support your drive to improve the school. You have worked with great energy and enthusiasm for the task in hand and are resolute in your conviction to lead the school effectively so that it is judged to be good or better when it is next inspected. You have responded well to the areas for improvement from the previous inspection, laying the foundations for improvements in the consistency and quality of teaching and learning across the school. Actions taken include:

- developing the role of support staff through training and new appraisal processes so they are better able to support the needs of all learners
- developing middle leaders by clarifying their roles and providing additional support so that they understand they are accountable for their own areas of responsibility
- working within a range of partnerships to share best practice between schools.

In addition, you have introduced new measures including teaching and learning and behaviour policies that have improved pupils attitudes to their learning and further improved their behaviour in and around the school. This has helped pupils settle into lessons more readily and be focussed on their learning.

Systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning have been tightened. There are more regular reviews of how well pupils are achieving and staff are held to account for the progress their pupils are making. Reviews carried out across the school show that these actions are beginning to improve some aspects of the quality of teaching and learning. The significant number of teachers new to the school means that the impact of these actions is not yet consistent throughout the school. Challenge and support is being provided where teachers' performance needs further improvement.

The school improvement plan addresses the areas identified in the recent inspection. You have rightly prioritised actions linked to improving teaching and learning but there is not enough emphasis on the progress that pupils' can be expected to make. As a result, the

milestones and success criteria, lack sufficient clarity. This makes it difficult for governors to pinpoint with accuracy how well the school is improving over time.

Governors are knowledgeable about the actions currently being undertaken by you and your staff. They now have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement and what the school needs to do to improve. A restructuring of governance is underway to improve the ability of governors to review the progress the school is making in a more efficient fashion. A skills audit is taking place but plans to improve the effectiveness of governance are not yet fully developed. Improvements in this aspect must keep pace with the developments elsewhere in the school to help the school move forward rapidly. 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 use of external support is a strength of the school. Working with local authority officers and a headteacher and staff from an outstanding school has been instrumental in the progress your school has made. They have contributed to monitoring progress and supported governors, teachers and middle leaders in developing their roles.

The local authority, diocese and collaborative headteacher are working well together to develop more effective governance capacity in the school

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Brown HMI

Her Majesty's Inspector