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2 October 2014

Mrs Louise Dale
Headteacher
Sandal Primary School
West Lane
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West Yorkshire
BD17 5DH

Dear Mrs Dale

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sandal Primary School, Bradford

Following my visit to your school on 1 October 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 June 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with: the headteacher and senior leaders; middle leaders; the vice-chair of the governing body and the governor with oversight of inclusion; and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Short visits to writing lessons in Key Stage 2 were made with the headteacher. A report from the Chair of the Governing Body, who was unable to be present, was taken into account.

Main findings

The headteacher and senior leaders have made an energetic start on the next stage of the school's journey towards becoming good. Working together, staff, governors, pupils and parents have drawn up a long-term vision for the school into which this

year's development plan fits. The appointment of two new middle leaders, with a third appointment planned for next term, has increased the capacity of leaders to drive improvement. Training is already underway for the new middle leaders, for instance on how to evaluate pupils' work, and more is planned in the form of coaching by the local authority's linked improvement officer.

The leadership of individual subjects is also being developed, in part in response to new national curriculum requirements. However, primarily the purpose is the development of a curriculum that matches the school's vision and fosters in pupils the characteristics of successful learners. Consequently, the starting points have been personal, social, and health education and religious education.

Senior leaders have introduced a training programme for teaching assistants. This focuses both on the development of learning and on areas where consistency is essential, such as the use of the school's calculation policy. Time has been allocated weekly for teachers and teaching assistants to work together on preparations for learning. A more joined-up approach to the use by teachers of planning, preparation and assessment time is being established so that good practice can be shared. Senior leaders have a tight schedule in place for monitoring the implementation of new practices, for example in marking, and following up where necessary to ensure that improvements become embedded.

The governing body makes regular checks on the school's progress, challenging leaders and requesting additional information on occasion. Governors each have responsibility for tracking progress on a particular priority in the school development plan and work with staff to evaluate the impact of actions. They triangulate the information they receive, for instance through visits to the school.

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 recognises that the school's capacity for driving its own improvement has increased and is likely to grow further. Training and coaching for middle leaders by the school's improvement officer is planned as a key contribution to this development. Consequently, consideration will be given to the timely reduction in the level of support provided by the local authority.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Austin

Her Majesty's Inspector