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Mr Colin Fleetwood
Headteacher
Haig Primary School
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Gutersloh
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Dear Mr Fleetwood

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Haig Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 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 and your staff 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 July 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 the school governance committee is provided with sufficient detail regarding both success criteria linked to the actions in the school improvement plan and the findings of monitoring activities, to be able to challenge leaders robustly about the school's progress.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders, and a representative of the Chair of the School Governance Committee to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. A learning walk to all year groups was conducted with the headteacher and senior leaders to look at marking and feedback in pupils' writing books as well as the level of challenge for more-able pupils. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

Six teachers joined the school at the beginning of the academic year so for the first time in nearly two years there is a full complement of teaching staff. This academic year there is a substantial decrease in the number of pupils on roll.

Main findings

Leaders and staff have got off to a brisk start on the journey to improve the school to at least good. The school improvement plan has been drawn up by both senior and middle leaders and it is clear that staff are pulling together to deliver this. The plan is firmly based not only on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, but also on a thorough analysis of data about pupils' attainment and progress. Actions planned are appropriately staged but the success criteria and sequence of monitoring activities, while clear to staff, are too sparse to enable governors to monitor and challenge leaders effectively about the school's progress.

The school's capacity to deliver improvements is growing. Middle leaders are taking on an increasing range of responsibilities, supported by training courses and coaching by senior leaders. For example, they have conducted joint lesson observations and been coached in feeding back to colleagues. Now the school is fully staffed, time is regularly allocated for management activities and this is helping leaders of core subjects in particular as they grapple with the demands of the new National Curriculum. Leadership capacity is also being developed through the creation of curriculum teams. Through these, staff are working collaboratively to implement the new curriculum in ways which best meet the needs of their pupils. Helpfully, the headteacher is enabling staff to play to their strengths, for instance in the development of the curriculum for art and forest schooling.

There has been a renewed emphasis on ensuring that marking and feedback helps pupils to make better progress. Teachers are writing comments that relate directly to the skills in use and, in the main, following up to ensure that pupils develop these skills in their subsequent tasks. Increasingly, younger pupils are responding to teachers' comments, for instance through writing additional paragraphs for a story. In some classes, they are checking their own work for particular characteristics before teachers mark it and becoming more alert to 'what a good one looks like.' Older pupils are less confident in making written responses to marking but do indicate when they have read what teachers have written.

This term has seen further development of 'talk for writing' as a tool to improve both pupils' oracy and written work. In the sample of work looked at, it was evident that this approach is helping more-able pupils to write independently with growing confidence. New mathematics resources are enhancing homework as pupils enjoy learning through online games and teachers are able to identify areas where more work is needed through instant assessments. There is a sharper focus on moving

good teaching to outstanding and some staff are attending courses designed to support them in this shift.

There has been an almost complete change in the membership of the school governance committee (SGC) since the end of last term. Parent, teaching and non-teaching governors have been appointed very recently and training, for what is essentially a new SGC, is planned for the next half-term as soon as the Chair is available.

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 Service Children's Education authority (SCE) is tailoring its support to match the school's increased capacity for improvement. The consultant who previously worked intensively and for a sustained period in the school, has been withdrawn. The school now benefits from the usual levels of support such as training in the demands of the new information and communications (ICT) curriculum. In addition, working with SCE, the school is piloting an assessment and recording system to match the new National Curriculum requirements.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of School Governance Committee and the Director of Service Children's Education.

Yours sincerely

Jane Austin
Her Majesty's Inspector