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Mrs G Newton (Executive Headteacher – (Acting) / Miss N Shackleton (Acting Headteacher)
Scapegoat Hill Junior and Infant School
School Road
Scapegoat Hill
Golcar
Huddersfield
West Yorkshire
HD7 4NU

Dear Mrs Newton and Miss Shackleton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Scapegoat Hill Junior and Infant School, Kirklees

Following my visit to your school on 20 January 2015, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 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:

- provide more detail in improvement plans about when actions should be evaluated, by whom and what successful implementation would look like
- maintain the recent rate of improvement by securing leadership capacity in the long term.

Evidence

During the course of the visit the school's work was observed and a range of documents scrutinised, including the school action plans. Meetings were held with the executive headteacher and acting headteacher, a small number of parents, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Classrooms were visited and a range of pupils' work was looked at and pupils were spoken with.

Context

The school has had a change in leadership arrangements since the last monitoring visit. The previous headteacher has left the school and a new acting executive headteacher from a good school is now providing significant support to drive the school's improvement. In addition, a member of teaching staff has left and been replaced by a new member of staff. New support staff are also in post. A new parent governor has taken up post.

Main findings

School leaders have built on the work started before the last monitoring visit and the school is now rapidly improving. This is because the initial arrangements to build leadership capacity has started to impact on improving outcomes for pupils. The support provided by the acting executive headteacher is at the heart of this improvement. Working collaboratively with the acting headteacher, they have ensured a sharp focus on developing classroom practice and ensuring consistent approaches to teaching and learning across the school. Evidence seen during the visit shows that this work is beginning to improve practice in the classrooms.

Support and training has raised teacher's expectations about the pace at which pupils should learn. This includes training on effective strategies to promote reading and getting pupils to work collaboratively. In addition, the use of problem solving approaches in mathematics and science are now more evident in lessons. As a result, pupils say they enjoy lessons and engage more with their learning. Most pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and they welcome the greater challenge in lessons. This view is shared by parents. Pupils' learning is further enhanced by a more effective system for checking their work and identifying what they need to do to improve their learning. As a consequence, the progress being made by pupils is increasingly evident in their books and pupils' willingness to engage in their learning. There is still, on occasion, insufficient time for pupils to respond to comments made by teachers in their books.

The school improvement plan lacks sufficient detail for governors to hold school leaders fully to account. It addresses most of the areas identified in the recent inspection and prioritises actions linked to improving teaching and learning. It lacks

sufficient detail about the actions being taken to support the most able pupils. In addition, the monitoring and evaluation processes are not clear. The intended outcomes in the medium and longer term lack sufficient clarity and governors cannot always pinpoint with accuracy how well the school is improving over time.

Governance has become sharper-edged with a resolve to challenge senior leaders and hold them to account. They now receive a wide range of assessment information about pupils' progress, including that of different groups of pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils entitled to additional funding. Governors are involved in the life of the school through regular and focused visits. As a result, governors develop a knowledge and understanding of the impact of the actions the school is taking to improve. Governors have worked hard to establish greater stability in staffing in the school and are working on options to establish longer term leadership capacity for the school. They recognise the urgency with which this needs to happen.

Whilst recognising the recent improvements following the previous monitoring visit, the school still has some work to do. All parties recognise that further improvement is required on the journey to becoming a good school.

External support

The use of external support is a strength of the school. Working with local authority consultants, an executive headteacher and other staff from a good school is instrumental to the progress the school is making.

The local authority continues to monitor the progress the school is making. They have an accurate view of the performance of the school and are working closely with governors to ensure sustainable long term leadership capacity is secured.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Brown
Her Majesty's Inspector