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Mrs Joanne Bradshaw
Executive Headteacher
Manor Lodge Community Primary School
Manor Lane
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S2 1UF

Dear Mrs Bradshaw

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Manor Lodge Community Primary School, Sheffield

Following my visit to your school on 6 February 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the 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 October 2014. At its previous section 5, the school was also judged to require improvement. This monitoring inspection 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:

- maintain the focus on improving the quality of teaching to accelerate pupils' progress further.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. The inspector also evaluated monitoring reports, the tracking of pupils' progress and records of lesson observations.

Context

Since the previous inspection there have been major changes to the governing body with the appointment of a new chair and vice chair. In addition, the school has also appointed a new learning mentor.

Main findings

Pupils' achievement is strengthening as a result of improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Evidence from the school's own data points to increasing numbers of pupils catching up and making better progress than previously. There is a more purposeful and settled air to the school with pupils excited by many of the topics and activities in lessons. This better picture has come about because senior leaders have done a great deal since the previous inspection to lay the foundations for improvements in pupils' learning and in raising their achievement. For example, the whole school focus on the teaching of reading and the sounds that letters make is lifting standards. Immediate action has been taken by senior leaders to reorganise staffing by clarifying roles and responsibilities and creating new positions such as key stage leaders. Classes have also been restructured and more opportunities are available for staff now to learn from one another and share the good practice that exists. The monitoring of teaching has been tightened and is more frequent. As a consequence, the pace of change is accelerating and all staff are stepping up to the mark as the collective responsibility for improving the school continues to grow.

Nevertheless, the school is aware that the progress of pupils across the school is not yet uniformly good in all year groups. There are still pockets of underachievement and in some classes pupils are behind where they should be due to weak provision in previous years and because the quality of teaching and learning is still too variable. Senior leaders are correct in recognising that the key to resolving this issue lies in maintaining the focus on improving the quality of teaching to raise pupils' achievement further.

The skills of middle leaders continue to advance with new appointments. Their early actions are pointing to a clear understanding of the school's most pressing priorities. As a group they are impacting effectively on school improvement, most noticeably on pupils' better progress.

Governance continues to improve also. Governors are clear about why the school is not yet good. They understand the strengths in provision and where further improvements can be made. As a group, they are increasing their knowledge of what goes on in school and are keen to access further training and support.

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 continues to provide an effective layer of extra support and challenge to the school, tailored well to the school's most pressing priorities. Links with other schools for example, have been well used to share good practice and strengthen the confidence and skills of staff. The time given by local authority officers will reduce as the school's ability to manage and direct its own improvement continues to improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood
Her Majesty's Inspector