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Mr Barry Stevens

Headteacher

Southey Green Community Primary School and Nurseries

Crowder Avenue

Sheffield

South Yorkshire

S5 7QG

Dear Mr Stevens

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Southey Green Community Primary School and Nurseries

Following my visit to your school on 17 March 2015 I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in September 2014. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of serious weaknesses.

The sponsor's statement of action is fit for purpose.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Interim Executive Director Children Young People and Families for Sheffield.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Keeler

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2014

- Urgently improve the effectiveness of teaching and raise pupils' achievement, especially in Key Stage 1, so that is at least good, by:
 - ensuring that pupils have a clear understanding of what they should be learning in lessons and that, through guidance and feedback, they know what they have to do to make the best progress
 - making sure information on pupils' prior learning is used effectively to ensure that the work set for them is suitable for their needs and helps them to make the best progress, whatever their ability
 - making sure teachers check pupils' understanding and progress regularly in lessons; for example, through questioning, so that tasks can be quickly adapted to meet their learning needs
 - improving pupils' writing skills, especially their writing across a range of subjects, and developing their spelling, punctuation, grammar and presentation skills
 - making sure pupils in all year groups are inspired and motivated to work with greater enthusiasm and urgency.

- Improve the impact of leadership and management on pupils' progress by:
 - rapidly developing the role of subject leaders so that they make regular checks on the effectiveness of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility
 - analysing the progress of different groups of pupils in order to check how well they are doing and to target support more effectively.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 17 March 2015

Evidence

The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the headteacher, subject leaders and a representative from the Tipton Academy Trust. A conversation also took place with the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector specifically evaluated the action taken by school leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the difference this is having in relation to pupils' progress.

Context

The school converted to an academy at the beginning of the spring term 2013. An executive headteacher was appointed in April of the same year. A permanent headteacher was also appointed in March 2015. Since the previous inspection in September 2014 ten members of staff have left the academy. There are currently seven newly qualified teachers at the academy.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

This is an improving school because the headteacher has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and high expectations of staff and pupils. The school improvement plan now contains appropriate strategies to bring about the changes required, all of which are now aligned to improving pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. He has successfully developed a strong sense of teamwork which is evident in a culture committed to systematic improvement. As a result, teaching is improving and achievement is beginning to rise. Current school-held data indicate that the proportion of pupils making greater than expected progress is higher for most groups of pupils in both Key Stage 1 and 2. The school predicts that the current Year 6 cohort will attain higher standards in the national tests for English and mathematics than their counterparts in 2014. A scrutiny of pupils' work together with a number of visits to lessons undertaken during the inspection suggest that this is likely.

Middle leaders, particularly those responsible for English, mathematics and science, are making a significant contribution in the drive to secure improvements. They have a good understanding of data with regard to pupils' progress throughout the school. They have successfully identified which skills and knowledge pupils lack and have produced very focused action plans that set out a range of initiatives designed to raise achievement. They are involved in monitoring provision and have refined their approach to lesson observations by focusing on learning and the extent to which teaching supports it. This is raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving and this is helping to raise standards.

The governing body and the trust have effectively supported the senior leadership in

improving the quality of teaching and learning. There is a clear link to teachers' and leaders' performance and their progression. The governors challenge and support the school in equal measure and recognise the improvements that have been accomplished since the previous inspection. A small number of governors, led by the chair, visit the school on a regular basis to see for themselves the impact of actions taken by school leaders to raise achievement. This includes looking at pupils' work and analysing pupil progress data. They are becoming much more knowledgeable about key aspects of the school's work, especially in relation to leadership, teaching and learning.

Leaders at all levels appreciate the gains made since September 2014. However, they also acknowledge that there remains much work to do if good teaching is to become the norm and if the achievement of all pupils is to reach the level they are capable of.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Pupils' achievement is rising because teachers are ensuring that lessons are well planned and actively engage them in their learning. More opportunities are provided for pupils to work collaboratively, particularly when solving problems.
- Senior leaders rigorously check the quality of teaching and learning on a regular basis to ensure that agreed policies are adhered to by all staff. For example, the quality of marking by which teachers assess pupils' progress has improved significantly since the previous inspection because pupils' books are scrutinised by senior leaders to check that marking conforms to the school's expectations.
- Greater emphasis on teaching the basic skills of reading (including the teaching of phonics), writing and mathematics is reflected in pupils' improving progress. This has been secured by ensuring a better balanced curriculum as well as the development of teachers' subject knowledge.
- The large number of newly qualified teachers are extremely well supported and given clear guidance and direction as to the standards of professionalism expected by the school. They are developing well, as is evident in the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils for which they are responsible. They are well placed to benefit from some outstanding practitioners within the school who provide excellent role models.
- At the time of the previous inspection the accurate assessment of pupils' achievement was often unreliable. This has now been successfully addressed and effective systems are now in place to track pupils' progress and identify underachievement.
- Pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school has clearly improved since the previous inspection. It is no coincidence that pupils' attitudes to learning have got better as the quality of teaching has improved. This positive attitude demonstrated by pupils is beginning to influence positively the progress they are currently making.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- The ability of teachers to identify pupils' misconceptions during lessons and take immediate steps to address them is not as well developed as it should be in all classes and this inhibits progress. Teachers' planning does not lend itself to recording observations of learning by either the teacher or teaching assistant.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels at the end of Years 2 and 6 is too low because of a legacy of weak teaching and insufficient targeted intervention for the more-able pupils.
- A significant proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional government money) are not yet making sufficient progress in reading, writing and mathematics in order to close the gap with all pupils nationally.
- Opportunities for pupils to write across a range of subjects would be more effective if it also allowed for pupils to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding related to those subjects. This is currently not the case. Teachers would benefit from a working knowledge of the history and geography curriculum as well as training to support its implementation.

External support

The academy trust has a very clear and accurate view of the school's performance. By working closely with the senior leadership and the governing body the chief executive has identified where support is required. The trust is currently utilising the strengths and expertise available within its schools to provide effective training and coaching in relation to leadership and teaching. This is helping the school to move forward.

Following the judgement at the first monitoring inspection the academy sponsor has now taken appropriate steps to ensure that the statement of action is fit for purpose.