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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 6 May 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 third 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 academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

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 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 on pupils' understanding and progress regularly in lessons; for example, through questioning, so that tasks can be adapted quickly 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 third monitoring inspection on 5 May 2015

Evidence

The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the headteacher, subject leaders, a group of teachers, pupils and a representative from the Tipton Academy Trust and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector specifically evaluated the action taken to improve teaching, pupils' achievement and the management of pupils' behaviour.

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. The academy has appointed seven newly qualified teachers since September 2014.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Senior leaders have maintained the pace of improvement identified during the previous monitoring inspection. Actions identified in the academy improvement plan which are designed to improve achievement are evaluated regularly and systematically by leaders at all levels. The success of the strategies employed is directly related to improvements in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. This in turn places increased responsibility and accountability on teachers for pupils' progress. This close link between planned actions to raise achievement and classroom practice is a major reason why many pupils are now making accelerated progress.

The governing body is increasingly involved in monitoring the work of the academy's leaders. A small improvement committee has been established since the previous monitoring inspection. Its members meet regularly with senior leaders to discuss the progress the academy is making to improve provision and pupil outcomes. However, the most significant part of this process is that governors look at pupils' work to determine for themselves whether improvements are being realised. This rigorous level of support and challenge for academy leaders is undoubtedly helping to sustain the momentum of academy improvement.

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Senior leaders have identified weaknesses in teaching successfully and taken steps to address them. Expectations of staff are high. With effective performance management in place, carefully planned, tailored support has been given to teachers to enable them improve their performance. This has been supplemented by appropriate professional development provided from within the academy trust. Teaching continues to improve, because staff have responded positively to the support provided by leaders and for this they should be commended. The large

number of newly qualified teachers is also supported well by a designated mentor. Their confidence and professional competence is increasing and as such they are making a valued contribution to pupils' progress.

The current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are on track to attain higher standards in the national assessments and tests for English and mathematics in 2015 than the previous cohorts. This is supported by the quality of work in their books, discussions with pupils and their responses during lessons observed during the inspection. However, the current system adopted by the academy to measure progress in Years 1, 3 4, and 5 does not portray accurately the accelerated progress that pupils are making. Academy leaders are acutely aware of this and acknowledge that this needs addressing forthwith.

Pupils' behaviour, including their attitudes to learning, has improved noticeably since the previous inspection. Pupils are generally polite to each other and adults. Senior leaders have set high expectations of pupils' behaviour during lessons, at break times and as they move around the academy. These expectations have been communicated to pupils successfully. Staff adhere to the behaviour policy of the academy and this consistent approach is why behaviour has improved. The most important factor is that pupils are demonstrating much more positive attitudes to learning and this is helping them to make better progress. There is a clear link between improved teaching where pupils are motivated and engaged during lessons and improved pupil attitudes.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Senior leaders monitor the work of the academy closely and set high expectations of staff and pupils.
- A very strong sense of teamwork and a commitment to securing improvement permeates the academy at every level and is driving improvement successfully.
- Leaders at all levels focus on learning and the contribution that teaching makes to it when undertaking lesson observations. This is proving productive in terms of teachers' self-evaluation and professional development.
- The proportion of pupils making expected and more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics is likely to be in line with the national average this year and this represents a significant step forward.
- Pupils are making better progress because teachers' planning makes clear reference to what pupils are expected to learn and this drives teaching.
- Teaching staff are becoming more adept at identifying pupils' misconceptions during lessons and taking immediate steps to address them. This enhances progress.
- The early years provision has been enhanced by improvements to planning and assessment that take into account the learning needs of all children and identify opportunities for direct inputs by teachers and assistants in order to develop children's skills, particularly in relation to language and communication.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Although plans are in place for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects throughout the academy, more work is required. This needs to be a priority for improvement over the next six months.
- Children in early years are not gaining maximum benefit from a balance of indoor and outdoor learning experiences.
- As a result of significant changes to staffing, including the structure of the senior leadership team, parents need to be updated about contact arrangements. This is to ensure that any concerns about pupils' safety and welfare are recorded and dealt with without delay.
- Teachers' planning now includes notes relating to pupils' progress during lessons, which they can then use to plan further work. However, teaching assistants are not sufficiently involved in this process and this can inhibit progress.

External support

The academy trust continues to work closely with the senior leadership team and the governing body. The trust has facilitated training for members of the governing body successfully and identified professional development opportunities to support the actions contained within the academy improvement plan. This is helping academy leaders to sustain the pace of improvement.