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16 June 2015

Miss Sharon Robinson
Headteacher
Errington Primary School
Windy Hill Lane
Marske-By-Sea
Redcar
North Yorkshire
TS11 7BL

Dear Mrs Robinson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Errington Primary School, Redcar and Cleveland

Following my visit with Philip Riozzi, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 15 June 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 not taking effective action to tackle the areas identified at the last monitoring inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- adapt the school development plan so that it clearly identifies, especially for governors, the difference actions are intended to have on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement
- improve the accuracy of assessment so that all pupils, especially the most able, are challenged in their learning and supported to reach their full potential
- ensure senior leaders are held to account for improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility so that they make a full and telling contribution to school improvement.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, senior leaders, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and the National Leader of Education (NLE) supporting the school. I reviewed a range of documentation including the school improvement plan, the checks made on the quality of teaching and the most recent information about pupils' progress. You accompanied me on a visit to each classroom to observe the quality of teaching, speak to pupils informally about their learning and gauge the standard of pupils' work over time.

Context

A new headteacher took up post in April 2015 due to the retirement of the previous leader. One of the assistant headteachers, currently teaching in Year 6, is due to leave the school at the end of the academic year. Two members of staff have been appointed for September 2015 to replace those leaving and to create an extra class. Two governors have been appointed recently.

Main findings

Leaders have shown a distinct lack of urgency and ambition in their school improvement work since the last monitoring inspection. While a number of actions have been implemented, inherent weaknesses in the systems and processes used to monitor and evaluate their success have diminished the ability of senior leaders and governors to hold staff to account. Mediocre teaching has been allowed to persist, pupils' progress in mathematics has remained slow and standards at Key Stage 1 have declined sharply. Leaders have held too rosy a view of their journey to becoming a good or better school at the time of the next inspection.

Your recent appointment has brought much needed focus and clarity to leadership. You have had to work swiftly and decisively in your first few weeks to review the current position and build a leadership team around you that has the potential to secure a more rapid drive for improvement. In a short space of time, you have set out high expectations, raised the bar of what is deemed acceptable and made a start on bringing much needed consistency to school systems. These are important first steps but you recognise that it is too early to judge whether these are making as big a difference to teaching and pupils' progress as you intend. While your renewed action plan includes all the relevant priorities, it does not include specific, measurable targets that are linked to improvements to the quality of teaching or pupils' progress. This makes it difficult for all leaders, including governors, to know if the actions you have implemented are making a discernible enough difference to pupils' learning.

The senior leadership team acknowledge that they have not contributed as much as they should to the improvement agenda. While they now speak of feeling trusted, empowered and part of a team, you still shoulder too much of the day-to-day work

and responsibility. Senior leaders need to step up to the plate and take greater responsibility for the work that needs to be done so that you build a greater capacity to affect change.

While there have been some 'quick wins' already, for example, in the more consistent approach to marking and feedback, you have only just scratched the surface of what needs to be done. You are well aware that more significant elements of teaching need to be addressed quickly if pupils' progress is to hasten. Assessment of pupils' work, in particular, needs to become more accurate so that teachers can plan appropriately challenging activities to meet the needs of all pupils, especially the most able. As we observed during lessons and when looking at pupils' books, too many pupils complete tasks that practice skills they have already mastered, slowing their progress and preventing them from reaching their full potential.

The external review of governance has not had the impact needed. While the review raised important issues for the governing body to address, a lack of ongoing support and training has prevented its recommended actions from becoming a reality. Governors rightly recognise that they have been too accepting in the past. New members are eager to make a greater difference but while they all want to challenge you more robustly, they have not received the correct level of detail about the school's work to enable them to do so with any great rigour.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

Visits by staff to good and outstanding schools within the Redcar and Marske Teaching Alliance have been ineffective in raising the quality of teaching and accelerating pupils' progress. While teachers have appreciated the opportunity to observe other colleagues, leaders have not held staff to account for implementing the good practice back in their own classroom. Training for senior and middle leaders has, similarly, focused too much on the theory and principles of leadership without ensuring they are applied meaningfully back in school. Local authority officers and the NLE supporting the school need to give far greater consideration to the nature and focus of future support if the necessary opportunities to learn from others are to be appropriately valued.

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

Yours sincerely

Lee Owston

Her Majesty's Inspector