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Mrs Carole Dickson
Headteacher
New Earswick Primary School
Hawthorn Terrace
New Earswick
York
North Yorkshire
YO32 4BY

Dear Mrs Dickson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to New Earswick Primary School, York

Following my visit to your school on 24 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- ensure that the school improvement plan includes specific actions, success criteria and milestone targets which are aligned to the intended impact on pupils' learning and progress
- swiftly form a small group of governors whose role is to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the school's planned actions and then monitor their impact
- establish a clear system for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching across the school that sharply focuses on the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plans, English and mathematics subject leader's plans and the school system for checking pupil progress were evaluated. Other documents were scrutinised including the outcomes of monitoring activities, reports to governors and local authority notes of visit.

Context

There has been some turbulence in staffing since the previous inspection. This has now been addressed and three new members of the teaching staff have been appointed to start in September. Leadership responsibilities have been restructured and will be evaluated once the new teaching staff have settled in.

Main findings

The headteacher has begun to tackle the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. Staff share her vision to improve the school quickly. However, their collective actions are not focused sharply enough to ensure the rapid improvement that is necessary to ensure the school's effectiveness becomes good in a timely fashion. Milestones are focused on completing tasks and make little reference to the difference they are expected make to pupils' learning and outcomes. Furthermore, it is not clear who is monitoring and who is evaluating the impact of the actions. This is slowing the pace of improvement and limiting the school's capacity to improve.

Governors are committed to the school and are clear that the pace of improvement needs to increase. They regularly ask searching questions and challenge senior leaders, particularly in relation to how well pupils are achieving. However, governors recognise that the information they receive is not always focused precisely enough. It does not enable them to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the actions that leaders are taking to improve the quality of teaching and achievement. Governors know their strategic influence in driving the school's improvement must increase.

There has been a focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics. For example, leaders have delivered staff training on marking and feedback, encouraged peer coaching, implemented new programs for basic skills and purchased resources. However, the impact on pupil outcomes has not been measured, monitored or evaluated.

There has been a pupil premium review which has resulted in an action plan which is focused specifically on actions to close the gap for disadvantaged pupils. For example, an experienced teacher has been appointed to give additional support to

groups of pupils and staff have been given training to ensure they have a clearer understanding about setting aspirational targets for all groups of learners. Two pupil premium governors have recently been nominated to work alongside two leaders in school to focus on the impact of these actions. There are plans to monitor and evaluate this carefully.

New systems to accurately measure progress pupils are now in place and senior leaders demonstrate that they understand them and are starting to use the information to identify any groups of pupils who are underachieving. Specific actions and interventions to address this underachievement are in the early stages of implementation.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. My intention is to return to the school in due course in order to evaluate the actions leaders are taking to improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement.

External support

A local leader of education from Swinemoor Primary School in Humberside has worked with leaders to devise an action plan which identifies actions to address the gaps in achievement for disadvantaged pupils, particularly in key stage 2. In addition to this, a new performance management system has been developed to quickly address weaknesses in teaching and to identify training requirements which are necessary to make improvements.

Action by the local authority since the previous inspection has focused on supporting writing in Year 2 and the accuracy of writing assessments in Year 6. The local authority has not kept a close enough eye on the progress the school is making over time. They are now, however, aware of the limitations with the current school improvement plan and are urgently putting in place additional support. The local authority's clear plan for improvement provided by Ebor Teaching Schools Alliance now needs to be implemented without delay. The impact of further support will be reviewed at the next monitoring inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Suzanne Lithgow
Her Majesty's Inspector