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Mrs Jane Loader
Rainbow Forge Primary School
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Sheffield
S12 4LQ

Dear Mrs Loader

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Rainbow Forge Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 30 November 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 April 2015. It 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 in order to become a good school. The school should take further action to:

- Ensure that lessons are interesting and engaging so that pupils enjoy and want to learn in all subjects.
- Continue to develop the ability of the middle leaders in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching.
- Ensure that information on pupils' learning is regularly and carefully moderated and that this information is used by teachers to set appropriate learning activities for pupils.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher and members of the governing body. A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school self-evaluation and action plan were examined. Information on pupil attainment was also considered. Pupils' views were sought in a meeting and also in lessons. Lessons were observed during the morning.

Context

Since the last Ofsted inspection, two staff have been absent on maternity leave and three newly qualified teachers have been appointed. Some class teachers have moved into different key stages to develop their skills to be more effective in helping pupils learn.

Main findings

- You have made good progress in developing the strength and effectiveness of your senior and middle leaders. Two of the senior leadership team have undertaken the NPQSL (National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership) and two middle leaders are undertaking the NPQML (National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership). The literacy leader, inclusion leader and the deputy headteacher are Specialist Leaders in Education. Although the quality of teaching is still variable, the management team now have a systematic approach to monitoring and sharing good practice. As a result, managers are in a stronger position to improve the quality of teaching.
- Teachers have improved their skills and knowledge as a result of external training courses in areas such as teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make).
- Evidence from discussions with pupils demonstrates the positive impact the new mathematics curriculum has had on their understanding and enjoyment. The new mathematics policy focuses on visual and manipulative learning and is now well embedded across the school. Pupils speak enthusiastically about mathematics lessons where they learn through hands-on activities and investigative work. Pupils confidently and knowledgeably discuss the work they have already learnt.
- Pupils are not as enthusiastic about learning in all lessons. They comment that some lessons are not as interesting and they do not always enjoy them. On occasion they say this leads to behaviour which is less than good.
- Pupils are happy that teachers are always there to help them with their work. They talk of how they get opportunities to ask questions and clarify their understanding. They enjoy 'reflection time', when they can consider the written comments on their work.

- The assessment leader has developed a new system to assess pupils' learning. Leaders and teachers have moderated pupils' work to ensure the accurate judgements of pupils' attainment and progress. They have completed moderation alongside schools in the locality, including one judged to be outstanding.
- On occasion, teachers are not using the information they have about pupils' abilities to set activities that match their needs. This means that sometimes pupils cannot complete activities without the need for constant adult support. Pupils resort to chattering and playing while they wait for assistance.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They meet with you twice a term and challenge you well.

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

- The local authority provides regular support for Rainbow Forge Primary School. Support from the local authority is now less intense and has been modified due to school improvement.
- The school also receives support for the newly qualified teachers through being an Achievement for All school.
- Senior, middle leaders and class teachers work closely with a group of schools in the locality. They have taken part in moderation and curriculum meetings. Senior leaders have also linked with a local outstanding teaching school, particularly when developing and moderating the mathematics curriculum.
- External consultants, such as a literacy consultant, have also helped the school evaluate and review their teaching and pupils' learning.
- This external support has helped the school in developing the quality of teaching, moderating pupils' work and in developing innovative curriculums.

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

Yours sincerely

Jo Sharpe
Her Majesty's Inspector