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Mr A Keane
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Dear Mr Keane

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ripon Greystone Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 11 December 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 July 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in July 2015, 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 in order to become a good school.

In addition to addressing the areas for improvement set out in the last inspection report, leaders and governors must take the following actions:

- revise the school development plan to ensure that there are clear, measurable targets that demonstrate the impact of actions on the areas for improvement, so governors can check and challenge the progress being made
- ensure that the time lost in securing the pupil premium review is made up by a prompt and robust response to the outcome of the review arranged to start on 20 January 2016
- agree a sustainable approach to supporting pupils whose behaviour creates barriers to their own and other pupils' learning.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the Chair of the Governing Body and other members of the governing body; the assistant headteacher who leads teaching, learning and assessment, mathematics and Key Stages 1 and 2; and the teacher who now champions disadvantaged pupils, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plans were evaluated. I reviewed assessment information and pupils' English and mathematics books from different year groups. I visited classrooms with you and talked with pupils during their morning break.

Context

Since the last inspection, a teacher who was appointed in September 2015 left the school unexpectedly after a few weeks. The vacancy was filled by another teacher after October half term.

Main findings

Overall, pupils achieved higher standards in 2015 than the very low results in 2014. Levels reached in reading and writing were at or above those typically reached by pupils in other schools. However, standards in mathematics and spelling, punctuation and grammar remained below those expected for Year 6 pupils.

There was also an improvement in the number of children reaching the expected level of development in the early years provision. Even so, half of the children still did not achieve the outcomes they needed to equip them for a good start when they moved into Year 1.

The 2015 results show that the small number of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 did make at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, current assessment information shows that some disadvantaged pupils in some year groups are not on track to reach age-related expectations by the end of this school year. Some of the special activities designed to help disadvantaged pupils catch up continue to be used even if results show they are not effective. This needs to be reviewed urgently so that resources are not wasted on what is known not to work.

There have been improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. The system for checking and supporting teachers to use the school's policies for assessing, planning, marking and feeding back to pupils is more robust than previously. Evidence in pupils' books show that teachers' marking helps pupils to progress and that teachers are following the school's plan to ensure that pupils work at an age-related level.

Pupils are not able to enjoy the full benefit of the improvements in teaching as the pace of learning is slowed due to their general inattentiveness and the disruptive behaviour of a small number of pupils. Pupils expressed their concern about the impact the behaviour of some pupils has on their feelings of safety and well-being, and the time teachers take to 'sort them out'.

There appears to be a reluctance among some leaders and governors to apply consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This lack of consistency is not helping to solve the problem. Until progress is made in securing good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning from all pupils, their outcomes will not reach a good standard.

Leaders have introduced a new approach to assessing pupils' work and tracking pupils' progress. There are discrepancies between judgements made by some teachers and the work seen in pupils' books. It is essential that these discrepancies are resolved so that governors can be confident they are receiving accurate information about the progress pupils are making.

Attendance is lower at the current time than it was for the same period last year. Persistent absence is high. Leaders and governors must review their current work to improve pupils' attendance as this work is not effective.

The school development plan does not clearly describe the intended results of the planned actions. This means that governors cannot check if the actions taken have had the right result.

The recent improvements mentioned in the previous inspection report are still evident but the impact of individual members of the leadership team is highly variable.

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

Despite various interventions and support, the actions of the local authority have been largely ineffective in bringing about rapid improvement in this school's overall effectiveness since the inspection of July 2013.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for North Yorkshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Hayter
Her Majesty's Inspector