

PROTECT-INSPECTION

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11 December 2012

Mrs Madelaine Burkett
Headteacher
West Melton Junior and Infant School
Stokewell Road
Wath-upon-Dearne
Rotherham
S63 6NF

Dear Mrs Burkett

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to West Melton Junior and Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 10 December 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed, including records of lesson observations, information about pupils' progress and pupils' work.

Context

Since the inspection, the school has been informed that it will be expanded from five classes to twelve over the next four years to accommodate new pupils arriving as a result of local house building schemes. The first two new classes will open in September 2013, with the necessary building work starting in summer 2013.

Main Findings

The headteacher and deputy headteacher keep a close check on pupils' progress and know exactly where the peaks and dips are. They focus their work on improving teaching where this is most needed to remove the dips. They frequently observe lessons and provide feedback to teachers which makes clear which of their pupils are underachieving and what action needs to be taken to correct this. This feedback concentrates on the recommendations from the inspection, particularly planning work at the correct level of challenge for all pupils. The quality of marking has improved since the inspection with pupils now being given clear guidance on how to improve their work and the time to put it into practice.

The school has a 'developing excellence plan' for tackling the weaknesses identified in the inspection. It includes appropriate actions for bringing about the required improvements within a manageable timescale. It makes clear how the Governing Body will be involved in monitoring whether the plan is effective. Governors ask searching questions, for example what is being done to help underachieving pupils to catch up. The plan includes clear targets by which governors can judge the rate of improvement in teaching and in standards at the end of Year 6. The targets for improving pupils' progress across the school are not so clear.

Senior leaders and the Governing Body have only recently been informed about the expansion of their school and they have not had the chance to start planning how they will minimise the risk this poses to the school becoming good.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- include sharper targets in the 'developing excellence plan' for improving the progress of all pupils
- plan carefully to ensure that the school's expansion will not slow the rate of improvement in teaching and pupils' achievement.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school has commissioned support from the local authority directly linked to the recommendation to improve mathematics teaching. Local authority consultants have negotiated effectively with school leaders how this support is built into the 'developing excellence plan' so that teachers are not overloaded by too many improvements at once. Prior to the inspection, the local authority gave the school effective support in removing weak teaching and it continues to monitor the school's progress systematically. The school values highly the training that the local authority provides for leaders and for newly qualified teachers. The school also derives significant benefit from its membership of a 'learning community' of local schools. For example teachers receive helpful guidance from subject leaders in an outstanding school and they work in cross-school groups to check the accuracy of their assessments of pupils' achievement.

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

Yours sincerely

John Rutherford

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority
- the academy chain where relevant
- Diocese - for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.