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25 June 2013

Mrs Ruth Janney
Headteacher
Strawberry Fields Primary School
Lidgett Lane
Garforth
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS25 1LL

Dear Mrs Janney

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Strawberry Fields Primary School, Leeds

Following my visit to your school on 24 June 2013, 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 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders, representatives of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan and scrutinised other documents including data on pupils' attainment and progress. I also toured the school with two Year 6 pupils.

Main findings

You and your staff have responded positively to the inspection findings. You feel the inspection 'unlocked' key areas for development that have sharpened the focus of your work to improve the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement. The local authority review shortly after the inspection enabled you and other leaders to develop a deeper insight into weaknesses to be addressed. This review also usefully supported phase leaders in developing their monitoring and evaluation skills. Your post Ofsted action plan identifies a range of appropriate actions and how you will evaluate their impact. Targets for attainment at the end of 2013 and 2014, while challenging in some respects, do not reflect sufficiently high expectations for pupils achieving the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2. You have identified some milestones for December 2013 to enable you and the governing body to check whether planned improvements are having the intended impact on pupils' attainment in the short term. However, milestones are not identified for the trajectory of improvement needed 'over time' to ensure pupils' achievement is on-track to be 'good' when the school is re-inspected.

You and your staff are drawing effectively on good and outstanding practice both within and beyond the local authority to develop teachers' skills and improve the curriculum. The expertise of your staff is also being used more effectively to support teachers in refining their approaches to teaching. Your prompt introduction of a new policy to improve the quality and consistency of marking and written feedback to pupils is beginning to have an impact. Similarly, the introduction of a dedicated weekly session of problem-solving in mathematics is a useful 'quick fix' while you and other leaders work to embed these opportunities more consistently across the curriculum.

Data analysis carried out by you and other leaders is enabling you to identify some groups of pupils and individuals where progress is not in line with expectations. Nevertheless, you agree that data could be interrogated more robustly to identify and tackle underperformance. You have sought pupil views and successfully identified some possible factors that may be contributing to slower progress, for example, in Year 3. You are taking swift action to try and address the concerns raised by pupils to avoid a repeat of this next academic year.

The governing body has responded to the recommendation in the section 5 inspection and commissioned an external review of governance. This has recently been completed but the findings of this review are still to be shared to inform future improvements. Very high attendance at the feedback at the end of this monitoring visit indicates governors are clearly committed to improving governance and your school. Recently appointed governors are providing an increasing degree of challenge and beneficial expertise.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- review targets for attainment to ensure they reflect sufficiently high aspirations for the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
- identify challenging milestones to set the trajectory for 'good achievement' and enable the school's progress towards this to be monitored more easily
- monitor more rigorously the progress of different groups of pupils in each year group and ensure reasons for underperformance are clearly identified
- take precise actions to help underperforming individuals get back on track and evaluate their impact
- take swift action to respond to the review of governance carried out by the local authority.

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

External support

Your school has been effectively supported by the local authority to seek out good practice and ensure monitoring and evaluation pinpoints more accurately where improvements are needed. As a result, teachers are more aware of good practice and are reflecting on how their own skills can be enhanced. Furthermore, phase leaders are evaluating more accurately and contributing more confidently to improvement work in their respective phases. The Joint Review Group set up by the local authority and the governing body is a positive step towards increasing the rigour with which your school's progress is monitored on its journey towards 'good'.

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

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority - including where the school is an academy
- 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.