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17 September 2013

Mrs Diane Smales
Headteacher
High Green Primary School
Wortley Road
High Green
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S35 4LU

Dear Mrs Smales

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to High Green Primary School, Sheffield

Following my visit to your school on 16 September 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 May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

- Ensure that the evaluation of teaching quality takes account of work scrutiny and pupils' progress over time as well as the observations of lessons.
- Identify how teaching will be further improved and specifically how planned classroom activities will always be at the right level to challenge all groups of pupils.
- Develop more formal partnerships with other, better performing schools.
- Strengthen the role of the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors in more formally evaluating the impact of planned improvements each term.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. All classrooms were visited and some pupils' exercise books were scrutinised. The school improvement plans were evaluated along with other school documentation including records from lesson observations.

Context

Since the inspection in May 2013 there have been a small number of contextual changes. One of the two assistant headteachers has resigned and left the school and the second has resigned and will leave at the end of December 2013. An experienced teacher retired and left in July. One permanent teacher has joined the school along with a temporary teacher. Some governors have changed their roles and there is a new acting Chair of Governors and a new acting Vice Chair of Governors.

Main findings

There has been a sharp increase in the nature and rigor of monitoring, largely undertaken by the headteacher. Although this includes the scrutiny of pupils' work and regular analysis of pupils' progress this information is not used to evaluate the quality of teachers' work overtime. Support plans are in place for teachers whose work has been judged to be less than good and include clear timetables for evaluating improvements. There has been some staff development, for example on the roles and responsibilities of teachers. Some teachers have begun to visit other classrooms and other schools to observe better quality teaching. However, further work is needed to ensure that appropriate staff training, for teachers and teaching assistants, leads more directly to improvements in teaching. Although improvement plans are sound, it is not clear how further improvements to teaching and learning will be systematically brought about, specifically in ensuring that tasks challenge all ability groups in all lessons. Termly pupil progress reviews are holding teachers to account for the progress of pupils. However, the headteacher and governors know that there remains much to do to secure good teaching in all classrooms. A particular challenge for the school is the recruitment of senior staff to its leadership team and to forthcoming teaching vacancies.

Governors have a better understanding of their role in both supporting and challenging the work of the school. A review of governance has begun and governors know that they need to undertake further improvement in order to improve their work. For example, they know that they need further training in understanding and evaluating school data. Governors, particularly the new acting Chair and Vice Chair of Governors, understand that they have a role to play in evaluating the work of the school. However, arrangements for doing so are under developed. For example regular, termly meetings with the headteacher are planned but the formal evaluation of progress is not currently formalised.

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

The local authority has provided appropriate support and the local authority's advocate for children has supported with moderating the school's evaluation of the quality of teaching. The local authority correctly identifies that the school will require more support than it has previously provided. Although there has been some work with another local school and some staff have visited other schools there is not yet any formal partnership with other, better performing schools. Governors took appropriate steps to engage the services of a National Leader of Governance, who has begun to review the work of the governing body.

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

Yours sincerely

Amraz Ali

Her Majesty's Inspector