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17 December 2013

Mrs J Holmes
Headteacher
Drax Community Primary School
Castle Hill Lane
Drax
Selby
North Yorkshire
YO8 8NP

Dear Mrs Holmes

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Drax Community Primary School, North Yorkshire

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

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- resolve outstanding issues relating to improving the quality of teaching
- ensure that all actions designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning , particularly in writing make specific reference to outcomes that will reflect pupils' progress
- ensure that the monitoring of classroom practice clearly identifies the link between what teachers do and pupils' progress and that this is used to develop teachers' skills
- establish a small governing body school improvement committee to evaluate how quickly and effectively the headteacher is securing improvements in relation to those areas identified at the time of the previous inspection.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan, governing body minutes and records of monitoring undertaken by the headteacher were evaluated.

Context

A supply teacher is currently covering for the absence of a member of staff within Key Stage 2 who has been absent since the previous inspection.

Main findings

The school leadership has not effectively addressed issues related to the quality of teaching either before or since the previous inspection. This is acknowledged by the headteacher and the Chair of Governors who accept that intervention should have taken place sooner. This is now a priority and steps must be taken to resolve this concern if pupils are to make better progress and achievement is to rise.

The school improvement plan does relate to all the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection however, it lacks important detail. The intended impact of actions outlined in the plan which are designed to enhance pupils' progress and raise achievement, particularly in writing do not indicate the difference they will make to pupils' learning. The school is therefore unclear as to what good achievement looks like and this will inevitably restrict progress. Furthermore, too many actions do not have timescales that indicate when improvements are to be realised. A far greater sense of urgency and focus from school leaders, including the governing body is required if the school is to provide a good standard of education with pupils achieving well. At the moment this is far from becoming a reality because there is very little evidence to indicate that changes in provision are improving pupils' skills at a fast enough rate. Recent training for staff has focussed on the teaching of phonics, guided reading and the delivery of mathematics intervention programmes however this has yet to make a significant impact on progress. The school marking policy has been reviewed and pupils now receive feedback that is evaluative and informative because they are given details about how they may improve their work.

The monitoring of teaching and learning by the school leadership has been taking place since the inspection. Monitoring records include notes of lesson observations that comment on what teachers do but there is little reference to how this is contributing to pupils' progress. If the quality of teaching is to improve then the link between teaching and progress must be identified if feedback to staff is to be beneficial in terms of improving practice.

The Chair of the Governing Body is fully aware of the school's weaknesses and acknowledges that there is a great deal of work to be done. However, the governing body is not sufficiently rigorous in monitoring the work of the school in relation to the quality of teaching and learning. Nor is it effective in holding the headteacher to account for the work of the school. Although a school improvement committee has been established to check the work of the school on a regular basis it is too large and is yet to make an impact two months following the previous inspection. This needs to change as a matter of urgency. The priority for this committee should be to focus on how successfully the issues raised at the

time of the previous inspection are being addressed and to report back to the full governing body so that all members are better informed.

It was not possible to meet with all members of the governing body during this visit. However, every effort will be made to meet with more members when I return to the school next term.

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 regular support to the school and recognised prior to the recent inspection that the leadership required support. However, the support has not moved the school forward at an acceptable rate. The school leadership will require additional support and guidance if the action points referred to earlier is to take place. The current Educational Development Adviser has only been assigned to the school for a short time but has a clear understanding of what needs to be accomplished in a relatively short time.
Yours sincerely

Christopher Keeler

Her Majesty's Inspector