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Mrs Amanda Turner
Headteacher
Allerton Primary School
Allerton Drive
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DN40 2HP

Dear Mrs Turner

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Allerton Primary School, North East Lincolnshire

Following my visit to your school on 30 April 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the 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 December 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

- ensure the school's improvement plans include clear milestones that set out what the impact of planned actions should be at key points across the year. Members of the governing body should use the milestones to evaluate whether or not the school is on course to become a good school
- ensure senior leaders and the governing body regularly check on the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils, including those with disabilities or special educational needs and those pupils supported by the pupil premium.

Evidence

During the visit meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, the Chair and vice-chair of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority. I also met with a group of pupils who were all members of the school council. You accompanied me on a tour of the school to observe the learning environment, pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning. I evaluated the school's planning for improvement, pupil progress data, checks on the quality of teaching and records of governing body meetings.

Context

Since the last inspection the deputy headteacher has left the school and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has been on extended sickness absence. The literacy leader is now the acting deputy headteacher and the numeracy leader is temporarily leading in the Nursery and Reception classes. This has resulted in some changes to the deployment of teachers in Key Stage 1.

Main findings

You have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and you agreed with the inspection judgement that the school requires improvement. You have quickly responded to the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection and have put in place detailed plans. Whilst the planned actions you are taking are appropriate, and show a sense of urgency, the plans need to be strengthened further by adding milestones that set out what the impact of planned actions should be at specific times across the next school year. This will allow governors to determine whether or not the school is on course to become a good school. You have a clear vision for the school and this is reflected in the significant on-going improvements that have been made to classrooms and the wider learning environment.

From my tour of the school it was evident pupils behave well, have positive attitudes and take pride in their work. They told me lessons have become more interesting and enjoyable since the last inspection. They also said they find success criteria helpful and that teachers are now better at explaining how to improve their work.

You have continued to make thorough checks on the quality of teaching and you are clear about which teachers need more support than others. There has also been a considerable amount of training for teachers and most are responding well and improving their practice. Consequently there is now more teaching that is good or better. Much has been done to develop the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) in Key Stage 1. Whilst this is improving pupils' reading skills, you have recognised more needs to be done to establish pupils' skills in matching sounds and letters in the Reception and Nursery classes. Plans are in place to strengthen the resources for this and training for staff is already taking place. You have also introduced a new policy to improve the consistency of marking and will shortly review the impact the policy has had across the school.

With the resignation or extended absence of some senior leaders, you have acted quickly to promote other staff to take on leadership responsibilities. These members of staff are being deployed effectively and are clear as to their new roles and responsibilities. They are drawing upon the training and development opportunities you have arranged for them, such as learning visits to other schools, to review and improve practice within the school. For example, they are ensuring newly qualified teachers in the school continue to receive good support.

You have strengthened systems for tracking pupils' progress and detailed records show teachers are being held accountable for the progress of each pupil. You have also extended the contracts of some teaching assistants so that they can provide additional support during the afternoons for those pupils that make slower progress. As a result, you expect standards across the school to be higher in 2014.

Governors have undertaken training on performance data and they are developing a clearer picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Your termly report to governors provides them with up-to-date information about the achievement of pupils, but does not include sufficient detail about the achievement of different groups, such as those pupils supported by the pupil premium. Consequently, there are some gaps remaining in governors' knowledge. The governors have recently established a standards committee, although there is not, as yet, a committee focused on evaluating the impact of the school's improvement plans. Therefore, governors are not clear whether the school is on course to become a good school or not.

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

Senior leaders in the school are pleased with the support they receive from the local authority. A local authority adviser has visited the school regularly and supported the school's improvement planning and advised on staffing issues. In addition, he has supported the headteacher to check on the quality of teaching and has brokered a link with the headteacher of Healing Primary School, who is a Local Leader of Education. Other colleagues in the local authority are providing good support to develop middle leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector