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14 May 2014

Mrs Julie Brown
Headteacher
Shawlands Primary School
Shaw Street
Barnsley
South Yorkshire
S70 6JL

Dear Mrs Brown

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Shawlands Primary School.

Following my visit to your school on 13 May 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and findings of the inspection. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in July 2013. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Director of Children's Services for Barnsley.

Yours sincerely

Ian Richardson

Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2013.

- Improve teaching across Years 1 to 6 so that it is always at least good, by:
 - raising the expectations of all teachers about what pupils can find out from each other, and for themselves
 - reducing the amount of time teachers spend giving instructions at the beginning of lessons and ensure that the instructions are easy to follow
 - providing more time for pupils to talk about their learning and to collaborate with each other
 - ensuring all teachers systematically check all pupils' understanding in all lessons
 - ensuring all teachers are flexible enough in their planning to adapt the activities and experiences to meet learners' emerging needs, so that all are constantly challenged and learn well
 - ensuring all teachers check regularly the impact of support provided by teaching assistants.

- Raise standards and pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in Years 1 and 2, so that pupils attain above the national averages when they leave school, by:
 - using information about all pupils' progress more assiduously to pinpoint underperformance earlier and to address shortfalls in teaching more urgently
 - checking more rigorously the impact of provision made for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, those for whom pupil premium funding is provided, and for the more able, in all year groups
 - improving pupils' sounding-out and recognition of common and unfamiliar words through regular opportunities to read individually, in pairs and in small groups
 - enhancing pupils' confidence to talk about numbers, use problem-solving skills and apply mathematics in real-life scenarios
 - ensuring all pupils write neatly, use basic punctuation accurately, spell familiar words precisely, and consistently organise their ideas in simple, then more complex, sentences.

- Ensure all pupils are motivated, eager to collaborate and work independently, in all lessons, by:
 - setting learning experiences in relevant and interesting contexts and scenarios
 - incorporating stimulating materials into lessons
 - developing pupils' skills and personal qualities so that they are confident to share views and ask questions of each other.

- Improve leadership, management and governance, building on recent improvements,

so that all staff are ambitious for all pupils and set the highest expectations, by:

- reviewing regularly and rigorously all information on pupils' achievements, especially those of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs
- checking regularly and rigorously the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning, introducing robust performance management arrangements for all staff
- determining the effectiveness of pupil premium spending, with particular emphasis on the progress made by pupils known to be eligible for free school meals
- reviewing the curriculum to ensure that it provides relevant and stimulating experiences for all pupils, and that it takes advantage of the many visits and out-of-school experiences to enhance pupils' communication and mathematical skills.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 13 May 2014

Evidence

The inspector met with the executive headteacher and the head of school. He also met with the local authority's school evaluation officer. He held further meetings with the executive headteacher and with the acting special educational needs coordinator. The inspector carried out a series of short visits to classes with the head of school. He then carried out a series of longer lesson observations jointly with senior leaders. The inspector looked at samples of pupils' work and scrutinised a range of documentation, including pupils' performance data, the school improvement plan and minutes of both governing body meetings and those of the school improvement strategic group, a group including school leaders, governors and local authority officers.

Context

A few staff have left the school since the first monitoring inspection. A thorough review of staffing has led to the appointment of two new assistant headteachers to complement the current senior leaders. One teacher is acting as special educational needs coordinator to lead developments in this area. The focus of this monitoring inspection is leadership and management, quality of teaching, monitoring procedures and pupils' progress.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Senior leaders have successfully overseen the improvement of school buildings and facilities for learning. The school now presents a colourful, stimulating environment where pupils' engagement is more readily achieved and maintained. Areas that were previously poorly used for storage have been liberated and turned into break-out areas where small groups of pupils and adults can meet and work together in light, airy surroundings. A concerted effort to promote effective learning has included a strategy of consistently displaying pupils' work and good information that pupils can use in their learning.

Beyond the physical environment, considerable work has been undertaken to bring about improved teaching, higher aspirations, improved communication and more consistent and rigorous monitoring of standards and progress. Underpinning this is the senior leaders' adherence to the detailed and well-structured school improvement plan which is used to monitor progress and improvement. Systems are now in place to allow senior leaders to monitor aspects of the school's performance and the systems are made accessible to members of staff. The flow of information concerning the outcomes of monitoring and the analysis of performance data is supporting improvement in the school. Documentation supporting improvement is extensive but coherent. Senior leaders have a very clear understanding of the evidence they have gathered that would support the view of improving provision and

performance in the school. There is clear evidence of improvement in terms of standards, progress and teaching.

Staffing changes, managed by senior leaders, have strengthened the provision, such as the appointment of two assistant headteachers with clear roles in specific key stages. The work of the acting special educational needs coordinator has brought significant improvements in the identification of the specific needs of individual pupils and the effective tracking of progress against pupils' individual education plans.

A strategic group involving governors, senior leaders and local authority officers supports the improvements in the school. This group meets frequently and keeps detailed and well-focused minutes of their discussions. They demonstrate rigour in their deliberations and are measuring progress against the school improvement plan. They are active in pursuing matters to the benefit of the school. The documentation kept by the governing body shows a less detailed approach to school improvement. It is clear that governing body involvement in the life of the school has improved and that some governor training is raising governors' capacity to challenge and support. A closer look at the role and function of the governing body will be part of the next monitoring visit.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Observations of lessons and a series of shorter visits to classes, carried out jointly with senior leaders, all support the view that teaching and learning have improved since the Ofsted inspection of July 2013.
- The outcomes of all joint lesson observations showed that the views of the inspector and senior leaders were in full agreement, supporting the view that the school leaders' account of improving teaching over time is reliable.
- The teaching seen was enthusiastic and encouraged pupils' engagement and activity. There were many clear opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves and they responded well to these.
- Pupils' behaviour for learning is good and they apply themselves well to the work. Any drift in attention is rapidly addressed by teachers and teaching assistants.
- Senior leaders have canvassed the views of pupils, teachers and parents in their quest to inform the improvement processes as fully as possible.
- Parental support for the school's senior leaders is very strong with 100% of respondents to a questionnaire believing the school is well led.
- Parents also recognise the improvement in communication with the school and the improved involvement they have with their children's education.

External support

The senior leaders in school continue to be strongly supported by the local authority through the frequent visits of the school evaluation officer. These visits result in clear evaluative reports that the leaders can use in their management of the school

and its improvement. The local authority has also supported improvements through additional funding and the provision of consultant time to the school. Associations with other schools have included the exchange of staff for moderation of assessments, and collaboration on planning and professional development. The school has also employed external consultants to help with checks on aspects of the school's activities.