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Mrs Pat Ward
Executive Headteacher
West Melton Junior and Infant School
Stokewell Road
Wath-upon-Dearne
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S63 6NF

Dear Mrs Ward

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to West Melton Junior and Infant School, Rotherham

Following my visit to your school on 11 September 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 April 2014. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement. This monitoring inspection 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 that more teaching is good.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the executive headteacher, head of school, other senior and middle leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. The school improvement action plan was

evaluated. I made tour of all classes with the head of school and executive headteacher.

Context

The headteacher left the school shortly after the last inspection. Following the inspection, an executive headteacher from the local secondary school was appointed to lead the school and the deputy headteacher became the head of school. In September 2014, two new teachers took on the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage and special educational needs. A Year 6/inclusion leader and two newly qualified teachers also started. The literacy co-ordinator has been appointed as acting assistant headteacher for teaching and learning. The school population has continued to increase as a result of housing development and people moving.

Main findings

Between the first s5 inspection and the s5 re-inspection there was no improvement in the grades for achievement, teaching, behaviour and safety, or leadership and management.

Over the term since the last inspection, the executive headteacher initiated and carried out immediate changes to improve the leadership, management and organisation of the school which have been welcomed by staff and governors. Prompt action was taken to tackle weaker teaching through additional support and monitoring or a change of role.

The head of school and executive headteacher established a set of non-negotiable expectations designed to improve the consistency and quality of lesson planning and delivery. These have been accepted by staff and provide a more formal basis for leaders to check the quality of teaching. Mentors have been identified to coach weaker teachers. Leaders communicate higher expectations and aspirations which are reflected in higher targets for achievement.

The learning environment has been tidied up and the school is better presented, including a new school sign. Classroom displays are beginning to provide more practical guidance for pupils' learning. Additional teachers from the partner secondary school have started to provide more expert teaching in science, modern languages and sports. Resources for information and communications technology have increased and plans are in place for further development.

In the summer term, a link was made with the executive headteacher of the partner primary schools, Tinsley Junior and Tinsley Nursery Infant Schools. This has provided new direction and models for improvement. The work between the head of school and the executive headteacher at Tinsley has resulted in a new programme for structured reading in small groups to improve comprehension and for using talk more effectively to improve writing. These initiatives have been supported by

training led by the partner school and a local authority consultant. Plans are in place to introduce a new approach to teaching handwriting. The school is beginning to make better use of examples of written work to show pupils what they are expected to achieve. Expectations about marking and feedback to pupils are clearer.

A new approach to reviewing pupil progress has resulted in individual action plans for pupils, including more accurate allocation of extra support for different pupil needs. The new co-ordinator for special educational needs has begun to document the procedures for measuring the progress of pupils at the beginning and end of support programmes. Teaching assistants have been given clearer responsibilities. Action to tackle and provide support for behaviour issues is more prompt.

Leaders have correctly identified improvements needed in the provision and organisation of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The newly appointed leader has a clear idea of how to tackle these and has already begun to introduce improvements to the indoor and outdoor learning environments, the use of assessment and to the teaching of literacy and mathematics. A partner school has been identified to support these developments.

The leader of mathematics has identified weaknesses in pupils' mental recall of mathematics, written calculation, understanding of mathematical terms, gaps in knowledge in shape, space and measure, and in applying their skills to new problems. A new mathematics scheme has been introduced to strengthen the consistency and continuity of teaching and learning and to support the implementation of the new national curriculum. She is working with other local schools to develop a calculation policy to be followed by all staff.

A review of governance, initiated by the executive headteacher, and conducted by a national leader for governance, is almost complete and the report will be produced shortly. Three governors are leaving and two new appointments have been made. Further governors are sought to provide a greater range of expert and external views. The Chair of the Governing Body welcomes the greater clarity and frequency of information from school leaders, the more rapid pace of change, the introduction of new approaches, and more decisive action by the new leaders, including on behaviour. Plans are in place to re-constitute sub-committees, to produce role descriptions for governors and to provide more guidance to enable governors to investigate and report on school improvement issues.

Communication with parents has improved by issuing regular newsletters. Parents appreciate the introduction of homework books which enables them to see their child's progress and teachers' comments about their child's work. A meeting with parents is planned to explain and consult parents on the changes that have taken place so far.

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 and headteacher consultant acted effectively to recruit the executive headteacher and to broker partnerships with local primary and secondary schools. A local authority consultant provided useful training for teaching English. The school is drawing effectively on the leadership support provided by its two partner schools. The executive headteacher has provided effective support and development for the head of school in her new role. The pace of change has increased because leaders from other schools have provided clear direction and helpful models of different approaches to leadership, management, teaching and learning. It is too early to judge the impact of these initiatives.

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

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell

Her Majesty's Inspector