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17 December 2014

Mrs Rosie Baldock
Headteacher
Barnburgh Primary School
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South Yorkshire
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Dear Mrs Baldock

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Barnburgh Primary School, Doncaster

Following my visit to your school on 16 December 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 September 2014. 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:

- simplify plans for improvement into one overarching plan that is shared with and understood by all stakeholders
- provide further training and development for teachers to ensure they quickly develop the skills and confidence to teach reading skills effectively, and assess pupils' progress accurately under the school's new assessment system
- ensure governors systematically hold leaders to account for the implementation and impact of the school's plans for improvement.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, two teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. You accompanied me on a tour of the school in which we visited literacy and numeracy lessons, looked at pupils' books and observed pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. I evaluated the school's plans for improvement, pupil progress data and a number of school policies.

Context

There have been no changes to staffing or to the membership of governing body since the last inspection. Senior leaders have introduced setting of pupils for the teaching of mathematics in Key Stage 2.

Main findings

Since the last inspection, you have worked with senior leaders and the local authority to produce a new plan for improvement. This plan includes appropriate actions and timescales to tackle the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. The new plan also includes useful milestones to help you check whether the school is on course to become a good school. However, you also have a longer term improvement plan and a separate governor improvement plan, which together, include too much overlap with potential for confusion. Consequently further work is required to simplify planning so that it is clear to all what actions need to be taken and evaluated.

You have taken sensible steps to improve the quality and consistency of teaching. You are making more regular checks on lessons and are providing teachers with more feedback about what is working well and what could be improved. Support plans are in place for those teachers requiring more specific guidance and they have begun a programme of visits to other schools to observe outstanding teaching. These visits have already led to changes in the way reading is taught. Teachers have also received training on the effective use of questions and are working together to implement a new policy on marking and feedback. There is evidence in some pupils' books that this policy is beginning to have a positive impact, as pupils now make corrections and improve their work more regularly. However, the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good and you recognise the need to provide further training for teachers across the rest of this year.

A wide range of approaches to raise standards in reading have been introduced. You have purchased some new, more appealing books and daily reading time has been introduced for all pupils. In Key Stage 2, some reading time is devoted to pupils reading to one another and you have ensured there is more time for pupils to read to an adult. In some other lessons, teachers have begun to focus on ensuring pupils improve their ability to write down their ideas about texts they are analysing. However, not all teachers are confident about how best to teach reading skills. More needs to be done to identify and share good practice, so that all staff can teach reading effectively.

In September you began to implement your preferred approach to assessing pupils' progress. In order to ensure teacher assessments are accurate, you have established

suitable arrangements for teachers to moderate assessments together and with other schools. Nevertheless, some teachers are not yet confident in the new approach and need further training and experience to ensure they can assess accurately.

Subject leaders for literacy and numeracy are clear about what needs to be done to raise achievement and there are appropriate subject plans in place. Since the last inspection, subject leaders have been more actively involved in monitoring data on pupil progress, making checks on the quality of teaching and supporting colleagues to ensure they pitch their lessons correctly. Subject leaders are also being held more accountable by members of the governing body.

The Chair of the Governing Body has established a curriculum and standards committee that will hold leaders to account for the implementation and impact of the school's plans for improvement. The committee will begin this process in January. A representative of the local authority has agreed to attend these meetings. A recent review of the governing body has taken place and governors are keen to act upon the recommendations.

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 adviser linked to the school has supported you in preparing the school's plan for improvement and has prioritised supporting the governors to develop their skills in checking the school's progress. Furthermore, the adviser will also conduct a review of the quality of teaching in the spring term. This review should provide useful information as to the impact of the actions you have begun to take.

You have also made effective use of external support from other local schools. For example, the headteachers of other local schools have worked with you and other leaders to check the quality of teaching and learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector