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19 January 2015

Mrs Catherine Hollis
Linton Primary School
Main Street
Linton
Swadlincote
DE12 6QA

Dear Mrs Hollis

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Linton Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 January 2015, 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 September 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

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:

- Improve the school improvement plan so that success criteria are more specific and that a regular schedule of monitoring is clearly defined.
- Develop a comprehensive programme of training and support in order to accelerate improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Ensure the external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding takes place imminently.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the subject leaders for English and mathematics and the SENCO, three members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I also visited all classes on a tour of the school with you, looked at samples of books and scrutinised a range of documents including the school improvement plan.

Main findings

The last inspection took place within 3 weeks of your taking up post as Headteacher. Since then you have put in place a more rigorous monitoring schedule. You have carried out observations of all members of staff and provided them with verbal and written feedback. Lessons are visited more regularly in order to evaluate responses to feedback and as a result there have been some improvements in teaching across the school. You acknowledge that the rate of improvement needs to take place at a faster pace.

You have produced termly school improvement plans which address specifically the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report. While you have completed an initial evaluation of the progress made by the school during the Autumn Term, the ways in which you measure success are not detailed enough to enable accurate and frequent monitoring of improvements on a more regular basis. It is not always clear who will be carrying out monitoring and when.

You have clear strategies for the development of pupils' spoken language and extended writing. New schemes have been established and pupils in all key stages show enthusiasm and stamina for extended writing, as seen in their books and their work in lessons. They have responded well to a revised assessment policy. The use of assessment stamps in the Reception class enables pupils to articulate clearly what they have done well in their writing and what they need to do to improve. Pupils respond well to written feedback through the use of different coloured pens, especially when given the opportunity to do so through the morning "Fix It" time. However, the use of the policy varies across the school.

You have raised expectations of both staff and pupils. The subject co-ordinators for English and mathematics and the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator are responding positively to this. They are holding teachers more to account for the development of their own professional practice and the progress of the pupils they teach than was the case previously. They monitor closely the progress of specific groups, including those pupils supported by the pupil premium funding and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The co-ordinators are developing systems to identify promptly when pupils are making less than expected progress and to ensure that the individual needs of these pupils are incorporated into routine lesson planning by all teachers.

The governing body has responded positively to the external review of governance completed since the last inspection. It has a clear understanding of the priorities for the school and are currently putting together a 3 year action plan. It has revised its committee structure appropriately, and as a result is better placed now to challenge and support you and your team. It has introduced a regular programme of presentations from subject coordinators when they are able to question astutely the effectiveness of strategies in place. They demonstrate a sound knowledge of the use of data to evaluate the progress of groups and are now using structured visits to the school to support the monitoring schedule. An external review of the school's use of pupil premium has not yet taken place.

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

You have received effective practical support from the Local Authority. This has been regular and has focussed on evaluating the quality of teaching, reviewing the school improvement plan and on moderation of assessments. In addition, the Local Authority has supported the introduction of schemes to support improvements in writing and behaviour for learning. You have forged links with local outstanding schools to support your professional development and moderation of judgements. This has proved valuable and you plan to extend this opportunity to more members of your staff. There is not a comprehensive training programme in place to support rapid improvement and longer term action planning.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Carter-Fraser
Her Majesty's Inspector

cc. Chair of the Governing Body
cc. Local authority