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Mrs Sharon Hutchinson
Headteacher
Adwick Primary School
Stafford Road
Woodlands
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN6 7LW

Dear Mrs Hutchinson

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Adwick Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 March 2015 I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. 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 third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in January 2014. 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 Interim Director Children and Young People's Service for Doncaster

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2014

- Improve teaching across all key stages, particularly in lower Key Stage 2, so that all is at least good or better by ensuring that:
 - all teachers consistently plan lessons that challenge and engage all pupils appropriately, particularly those at most risk of falling behind in their learning at Key Stage 2
 - all teachers have higher expectations of all pupils
 - all teachers carefully check that pupils understand what they are learning, that pupils are productive and learn well when they work on their own and that they behave well at all times
 - all teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give pupils the guidance they need to improve their learning in all subjects
 - the teaching of mathematics is improved so that all pupils are secure in their number skills.

- Raise standards in order that all pupils, particularly in some Key Stage 2 classes, make at least good progress in English, especially in reading and writing, and in mathematics by ensuring that:
 - spelling, grammar and punctuation skills are taught well and applied consistently in all classes and pupils have more opportunities to write at length to extend their literacy skills
 - pupils' ability to understand and recall key number facts and multiplication tables are secure and that pupils apply them confidently in calculation and problem-solving activities
 - pupils supported through the pupil premium funding and those with special educational needs receive effective and timely help to accelerate their learning so that they achieve as well as they should.

- Improve further the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governors, in driving forward the school's improvement by:
 - making sure that staff training has a significant impact on the quality of teaching, and if necessary attending to where it is not, in order to accelerate pupils' progress in every class
 - ensuring that behaviour is managed well in all lessons
 - ensuring all subject leaders conduct rigorous checks on teaching and learning and drive improvements effectively in their subjects
 - undertaking an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 18 March 2015

Evidence

The inspector met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, three other governors and a representative of the local authority. The inspector undertook a tour of the school with the headteacher to observe aspects of teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning. In addition, the inspector scrutinised assessment information and looked at a sample of pupils' books.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection two teachers have left the school. One other teacher will leave the school at the end of this term and another has begun a maternity leave. Two new teachers have joined the school, one of whom is now the special educational needs coordinator. The support provided by a National Leader of Education (NLE) has now ceased. There have been no changes to the membership of the governing body, although the governing body has restructured its committees.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Leaders and managers have a thorough and accurate picture of the progress the school has made and know what still needs to be tackled. The level of expertise within the staff has been strengthened by some recent appointments and areas of weaker practice are now being tackled quickly. Consequently, the school is no longer reliant upon external support.

Significant efforts to address the variability in the quality of teaching have continued, which has resulted in some further changes to staffing. However, a more stable position has now been achieved and the quality of teaching is becoming more consistent. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated and rigorous checks by the local authority suggest the quality of teaching is increasingly of good quality. The headteacher has recognised that further gains in the quality of teaching will now come through training and coaching and has set up a number of professional development opportunities to support less experienced teachers and 'raise the bar' further.

Senior leaders have improved systems for collecting and analysing pupil progress and attainment information. As a result, areas of underperformance are now identified more precisely and swifter action follows to secure improvements. Pupil progress meetings have become more effective and teachers are held more accountable for the progress of every child. Pupils currently in the school are making more rapid progress and ground lost through weak teaching in the past is being made up. The school expects standards in external tests at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to rise markedly this summer.

Specific support for pupils with special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and those in the care of the local authority is now more organised. Teachers are more aware of the particular needs of these pupils and are becoming more skilled in tailoring their teaching to meet their needs. As a result, they now make better progress than in the past, although gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils are not closing fast enough.

Middle leaders now play a more significant role in checking the quality of classroom practice. Since the previous monitoring inspection they have developed their skills in using data to determine where practice is stronger or weaker. As a result, they are focusing particularly on strengthening teachers' mathematics subject knowledge and improving pupils' handwriting and presentation.

The governors have established effective practices for checking on the school's progress and holding leaders to account for the areas of improvement identified in the last full inspection of the school. In addition, governors now have arrangements in place to check on the performance of teachers and make decisions about their pay progression. However, governors are less informed about other areas of the school's work, such as arrangements for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development or how the school prepares pupils for life in modern Britain.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Weaknesses in teaching are being tackled effectively. Stronger arrangements for the professional development of all teachers are now in place and particular support for less experienced teachers is planned.
- The school has simplified its approach to assessing pupils' progress and has arrangements in place to ensure assessment information is reliable and secure. As a result, pupils making slower progress are now targeted for additional support more effectively.
- Joint work between a newly-appointed leader and the local authority is improving provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The school's programme for teaching phonics (the sounds letters and groups of letters make) in the early years and Key Stage 1 is becoming well established. Recent assessments suggest the proportion of pupils working at the expected level in phonics is now similar to the national average.
- Leaders and managers are increasingly confident to sustain improvements and expect standards in external tests to rise across the school this summer.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- The quality of presentation in pupils' books has not improved sufficiently. There is too much unfinished and untidy work. Leaders need to raise expectations further and make clear what is acceptable and what is not.
- Members of the governing body need to ensure they make enough visits to the school to deepen their understanding of the school's work and the impact of the wider curriculum.
- Some teachers are less effective in teaching mathematics. In particular, some teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their number skills to solving mathematical problems.

External support

The local authority adviser linked to the school has a deep understanding of the school's performance. In February, the local authority undertook a review of the school. The resulting report serves as a useful evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, and provides appropriate recommendations. The local authority adviser has also provided helpful guidance to the governing body and developed governors' role in scrutinising the school's progress. Good support has also been provided to develop the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs.