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17 March 2015

Mrs Kelly Bentley
Headteacher
Cottingley Primary Academy
Dulverton Grove
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS11 0HU

Dear Mrs Bentley

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Cottingley Primary Academy, Leeds

Following my visit to your school on 16 March 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 November 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders, governors and the sponsor are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- instigate and complete the external review of governance following the agreement of recent appointments to the governing body.

Evidence

During the inspection meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, a governor, pupils and a representative of the academy's sponsor, the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET). The academy improvement plan was evaluated. The inspector conducted two learning walks during the day, both accompanied by the headteacher. These included a brief observation of mathematics teaching in upper Key Stage 2 as well as a scrutiny of some work.

Context

Since the last inspection the Year 6 teacher has resigned and been replaced with a permanent teacher. The assistant headteacher, who is also the mathematics leader, has returned from maternity leave.

Main findings

Leaders have had a relentless focus on ensuring systems and procedures are in place to support their drive to improve the academy. The headteacher and wider leadership team are resolute in their determination to lead the school effectively so that it is judged to be at least good when it is next inspected. They have responded well to the areas for improvement from the previous inspection, working with urgency to lay the foundations for improvement. Nonetheless, although senior leaders have a secure long-term vision for the school, this is not the case for all leaders at all levels.

The academy development plan provides a clear direction for the school and has a sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching in mathematics and raising standards, improving behaviour and in strengthening the impact of leadership at all levels. Actions taken to date include:

- developing the role of support staff through training and to support the challenge for all learners particularly in the Early Years
- making sure teachers' assessment information on what pupils can do is accurate and supports them to plan more appropriate and challenging activities particularly within mathematics
- clarifying and developing the role of middle leaders by providing additional support so that they can be held accountable for their own areas of responsibility
- recruiting governors to ensure leaders are appropriately challenged and progress is sustained.

Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have focused successfully on the aspects of teaching that require improvement and have raised awareness of what constitutes effective learning and challenge.

Behaviour rewards and sanctions have been revised, resulting in a significant reduction in incidents. New measures have improved pupils' attitudes to their learning and further improved their behaviour in and around the school. This has helped them settle into lessons more readily and focus more on their learning.

The Early Years leader is determined to address areas for development thoroughly and at pace. She has delivered and accessed additional training for all staff to ensure that they challenge children and promote their independence. Listening walks carried out by the Early Years leader are clearly focussed on how children can be better engaged in their own learning and set themselves challenging

targets. There are currently 58% children assessed as being within the expected level of development and a group of children identified as exceeding expectations who receive additional intervention to continue to accelerate their progress and attainment.

Systems to check on the quality of teaching are gathering pace with the increased focus on coaching and individual support for teachers. Whilst currently the monitoring is largely done by senior leaders, the process for further developing the role of all leaders in monitoring is planned. Leaders report back regularly to staff on the quality of lessons and pupils' work, with clear guidance to help bring about improvement. Points for development are shared and there is a carefully planned approach to improvement. Middle leaders are far more focused in their work and so their ability to influence colleagues is increasing. For example, two middle leaders who are responsible for monitoring provision for more-able pupils could describe their initial analysis and identification of issues, interventions that were in place and the impact of these. They are aware of the need to raise long-term aspirations for pupils and so have secured an opportunity for pupils to visit Leeds University. There are regular reviews of how well pupils are achieving and increasingly staff are held to account for the progress their pupils are making. Recent reviews carried out across the school show that these actions are beginning to improve some aspects of teaching and learning. However, this picture is not consistent across all classes. Challenge and support is being provided where teachers' performance needs further improvement.

Following the appointment of a new Year 6 teacher after the inspection, there has been intensive scrutiny to ensure that progress and attainment are accelerated. There is extensive support targeted at individual need and pupils say this is really helping them to make progress.

Changes to the curriculum are having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are rising. The new mathematics curriculum developed by AET is supporting teachers to plan interesting learning activities and investigations that encourage pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning. Parents are being included more in their children's learning and kept informed of progress, particularly in the foundation stage where assessment is a two way process with photographs being sent by parents to a designated email address. More effective use is being made of the best practice within the school and elsewhere to provide training and coaching activities for staff.

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 support provided by AET to develop the mathematics curriculum since January has been particularly well received and is having a positive impact on the quality of mathematics teaching and the progress pupils are making in this subject. The

academy has had training for all staff, modelling and support in monitoring the impact of developments in mathematics. The headteacher is drawing on a number of external independent consultants to support the development of middle leadership. The impact of this work can be seen in the increasing confidence of senior staff and the strengthening of middle leadership.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Academies Enterprise Trust and the Director of Children's Services for Leeds.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Wiles

Additional Inspector

Appointed as an Additional Inspector, under the powers relating to additional inspectors, in paragraph 11 of Part 2 of Schedule 12 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006.