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1 May 2015

Mrs Jane Dark
Headteacher
Victoria Primary School
Cartmel Road
Keighley
West Yorkshire
BD21 2RD

Dear Mrs Dark

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Victoria Primary School, Bradford

Following my visit to your school on 30 April 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 February 2015. 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 not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- sharpen the action plan to ensure it:
 - is focused on the right actions to rapidly improve weaker teaching
 - includes measurable success criteria, so that precise checks can be made on the progress the school is making
- ensure leaders make the right checks in order to evaluate accurately how well the school is performing
- ensure senior leaders evaluate more rigorously how effectively other leaders' actions improve the quality of teaching, pupils' learning and achievement and hold them to account
- undertake the review of governance.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you; other senior and middle leaders; the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body; and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school action plan. You and I visited some lessons to look at the development and impact of the actions taken since the last inspection. We also scrutinised pupils' work together. I examined documentation relating to governance.

Context

There have been no changes to staffing since the inspection.

Main findings

Leaders are not tackling the areas for improvement with the clarity and rigour needed to ensure the school is judged 'good' at the next inspection. They have not identified how to improve teaching and leadership in enough detail or with sufficient precision. Consequently, there is a lack of sharpness and focus on the weakest teaching and it is not improving at an acceptable pace. Leaders' checks on the development and impact of actions such as, improving pupils' handwriting and presentation have not been robust enough. This has resulted in some teachers not addressing issues effectively and not sustaining improvements.

The school's action plan does not make clear what leaders expect, because they are unclear about what success should look like. Leaders' expectations of pupils' progress are too modest and are not measured against national expectations. Senior leaders continue to draw upon external support to improve leadership and teaching but have not taken into account the strengths within their own school to tackle this.

Leaders' actions to improve mathematics have ensured teachers are beginning to focus more on how to deepen and broaden pupils' understanding. For example, there is emerging evidence in pupils' work that teachers are providing more opportunities for pupils to reason mathematically and explain their thinking. Nevertheless, this is at an early stage of implementation and there has not been enough time to evaluate the impact of this on pupils' learning and achievement.

In the early years, leaders have taken action to address gaps in children's development by setting up systems and procedures that enable all staff to be clear about how individual children need to develop further. This is at an early stage of implementation. In addition, actions to improve adults' understanding and use of next steps in learning have not focused enough on ensuring these staff evaluate children's learning effectively, in order to plan the next steps in learning progressively.

The review of governance, required by the inspection has not been undertaken. At the time of my visit there were not enough governors available to evaluate precisely how well they challenge leaders and check on the impact of their actions. I will return to the school to meet with governors on 12 May 2015.

Her Majesty's Inspector will carry out a further monitoring inspection before the end of the summer term to evaluate the progress the school is making and, where necessary, will provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school actively seeks external support and professional development for staff from partner schools and consultants, but does not evaluate robustly enough what impact this is having on improving teaching and outcomes for pupils.

The local authority has failed to make timely and rigorous checks on the school's actions since the inspection to gather an accurate view of the school's progress. For example, the school improvement officer had only received a copy of the school's action plan the day before my visit.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Bradford and as below.

Yours sincerely

Anne Bowyer

Her Majesty's Inspector