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Mrs Julia Remington
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Remington

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Badsley Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 19 October 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 April 2015. 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 in order to become a good school.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, three members of the governing body, a group of seven parents, and a representative of the local authority to discuss actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement action plans were evaluated. Additionally, the outcomes of monitoring activities and the impact of performance management were scrutinised and the provisional outcomes from national checks, tests and assessments analysed. You accompanied me on a learning walk around the school during which discussions were held with pupils and samples of their work were scrutinised. Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons and around the school including in the outdoor play areas.

Context

Since the last inspection the structure, roles and responsibilities of some school leaders have been reviewed and reorganised. Some staffing changes have taken place. A review of governance has been completed.

Main findings

Senior leaders and governors responded quickly to the outcome of the last inspection. They embraced the inspection findings and set about tackling the areas for improvement. For example, the school's improvement plan was immediately reviewed to take account of the points for improvement identified during the inspection. The governing body rapidly arranged for a review of governance to be undertaken. This has been completed with the full support and participation of governors and the report arising from this will shortly be presented to the full governing body.

Senior leaders' roles and responsibilities have been reviewed and a new structure put into place from September 2015. Four phase leaders now have responsibility to monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement across the classes in each of early years, Key Stage 1, lower Key Stage 2 and upper Key Stage 2. In addition, subject leaders also monitor the school's performance and liaison between these teams is much improved. The procedures for monitoring linked to performance management arrangements are also strengthened. In four week blocks, each teacher is monitored across a range of subjects through direct observations of teaching and learning, scrutiny of pupils' work and by tracking data showing pupils' progress and attainment.

Since the last inspection, provisional results of national tests, checks and assessments in 2015 have been published. These give some cause for celebration but equally much caution and concern. For example, for the first time, the attainment of pupils in Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' standards and progress. However, the measures of pupils' progress from their starting points in Year 2 show that below average percentages made expected or more than expected rates of progress. This highlights the legacy of underachievement over time. Worryingly, the attainment of pupils in Year 2 in 2015 declined, continuing a three-year falling trend, and standards were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the early years, the measure of a good level of development improved significantly to be in line with that seen nationally. Over three years, the measure shows that children enter Year 1 with mainly typical skills; they are well prepared for Key Stage 1. This suggests that during Key Stage 1 pupils are not making enough progress given the below average standards they go on to achieve.

Senior leaders and governors are knowledgeable about the depth of the underachievement shown by these latest results. They acknowledge the urgent need to improve the quality of teaching rapidly and quickly raise standards. With this in mind, the long-term targets set by the school for such improvements do not provide high enough expectations if the school is to become a good school within, approximately, the next 18 months. This is because many pupils are starting from a lower point than first realised. The school's improvement plans require further review to include suitably challenging expectations which can be checked systematically along the way and, if achieved, will mean the school is well placed to improve to being judged as good. Equally, the expectations leaders have for individual staff performance need to reflect accurately this heightened need to accelerate learning.

Across the school, staff have increased their expectations for how pupils present their written work. New guidelines are found in pupils' books showing the 'high 5s' detailing, for example, the importance of a sharp pencil and careful use of a ruler. The difference this has made is clear to see. Pupils' books seen during the inspection show much-improved standards of handwriting, organisation and general neatness of work. The marking policy has been reviewed and this is being implemented more consistently. Pupils speak confidently about the three ticks system and say it is improving the way they learn.

The school has made the teaching of reading a priority. Training for staff in teaching phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and how to guide pupils' reading has raised the profile of this important skill, increased staff expertise and is leading to higher expectations, especially in Key Stage 1. Pupils take books home and have a daily journal in which parents and staff can write comments. Parents spoke enthusiastically about the school's approach to encouraging children to learn to read.

Staff are more consistent in their implementation of the school's policy to manage pupils' behaviour. The 'rainbow' system is fully understood by pupils and staff and successfully provides a structure by which the school can monitor behaviour and identify pupils who need support. Behavioural incidents have fallen since the last inspection. Leaders have raised the profile of attendance and parents spoke about the letters sent by the school to encourage full attendance. Attendance is improving, as shown by school data for this term. Leaders monitor attendance for individuals who are persistently absent and take suitable actions to improve this. Observations of pupils' behaviour and conduct during the inspection show no notable misbehaviour in or around the school.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

External support is tailored well to assist the school's improvement. The local authority identifies the school as needing additional support. Consequently, the school receives visits from a consultant headteacher and two teaching consultants who support the school's work to improve reading and mathematics, especially in Key Stage 1. There is a local authority representative on the governing body. Governors have accessed training delivered by the local authority led by a national leader of governance. The result of this external support is to add expertise to the school's leadership and governance, provide targeted training and an external evaluation of the school's progress. Discussions during the inspection show the positive impact in each of these areas.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Rotherham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Coleman

Her Majesty's Inspector