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3 March 2014

Mrs Rebecca Shearer
Executive Headteacher
Great Coates Primary School
Crosland Road
Grimsby
DN37 9EN

Dear Mrs Shearer

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Great Coates Primary School, North East Lincolnshire

Following my visit to your school on 28 February 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 2013. 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. The school should take further action to:

- strengthen the action plan to include quantifiable targets and regular measures of success linked to sources of evidence
- identify clearly within each part of the action plan who is responsible for monitoring and especially who evaluates the progress being made
- adapt the progress sheets to include information about all groups of pupils
- check regularly on the work being undertaken by all leaders at all levels
- consolidate the significant changes already in place and ensure they are thoroughly embedded
- ensure leaders receive written reports from all external sources.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the head of school and other senior and middle leaders. I met with the Chair and two members of the governing body and held a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner. The purpose of these meetings was to evaluate the current situation in the school and the actions that are being taken. We also looked at your evidence about the quality of teaching and the progress being made by pupils throughout the school. Two pupils talked to me about the assertive mentoring programme and showed me their books. You and the head of school took me on a tour of the school so that I could observe pupils at work.

Context

The headteacher resigned on 14 February 2014. You continue to lead the school on a part-time basis. Since the recent inspection, two temporary teachers have left. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader was appointed on 1 January 2014 and a class teacher has returned to her post following maternity leave.

Main findings

You have continued your drive for improvement relentlessly. Strong and enthusiastic support is provided by the head of school. Together with other leaders there is a clear willingness to make a difference and ensure that all pupils do as well as they can. Nevertheless, you recognise the need to harness this enthusiasm and ensure that changes are embedded and make a difference. Evidencing improvements, measuring the progress made by all groups of pupils is necessary so that there are appropriate interventions. It is important to recognise though that much has been achieved in a short time and the governors have played an important part in this work.

Staff have been involved in auditing the provision of mathematics throughout the school. Lessons need to be learnt, so that improvements can be made when reading and writing are audited. Precise detail about the teaching of each subject and the progress made by different groups is important so that you can identify clearly why, for example, some groups do considerably better than others. The introduction of clear expectations regarding how books are marked and that pupils will be set targets regularly so they know how to improve (assertive mentoring), both of which have been generally welcomed and show promise.

You and the head of school are under no illusions that the significant previous staff changes have had a detrimental effect on the progress made by some pupils. The links between your staff and those at Eastfield Primary Academy is well established so that staff can learn together and share practice. Lesson observations are done regularly which informs individual training programmes. Consequently, individuals understand how to improve and you can check this frequently.

I will visit the school during June 2014 to check that systems and progresses are embedded and to provide additional support and challenge if needed.

External support

The school improvement partner, working for Serco on behalf of the local authority visits regularly. However, you do not receive a written note of these visits; this omission must be rectified so that you can evidence the impact of the visits. At your behest, the school improvement partner will undertake a formal review later this term so that you have an external evaluation of the current situation.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Executive Director of Children's Services for North East Lincolnshire.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young

Her Majesty's Inspector