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Mrs V Helliwell
Executive headteacher
Brinsworth Manor Junior School
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Dear Mrs Helliwell

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Brinsworth Manor Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 23 November 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 May 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 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 as executive headteacher, the head of school, and the assistant headteacher, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I looked at work in pupils' books with subject leaders. I reviewed the school's action plan and minutes of meetings about the delivery of the plan. Together, we conducted a joint learning walk to observe the pupils in lessons and the impact of the new approach you are taking to classroom environments. I listened to pupils read and talked with them about changes in how they are taught to read. Pupils talked about how the school has changed since the previous

inspection. I checked safeguarding records and discussed with staff the revised approach to all aspects of safeguarding now in place in the school.

Context

Since the inspection the former headteacher has left the school. You have been the executive headteacher since April 2015, working at the school for half of the week. The governors have, with the support of the local authority, appointed a temporary, full-time head of school to work with you. Temporary teachers are covering two teachers on maternity leave.

The office team has been restructured and includes the new positions of a part-time business manager and administrative assistant.

Main findings

As a result of your leadership, teachers and teaching assistants are now working with a clear sense of purpose, sharing your vision for improving the school.

The new approach to teaching, learning and assessment, introduced by you and the head of school, is being implemented in all classrooms and starting to benefit all pupils. Pupils value the classroom displays about reading, mathematics and writing because they use the displays to help them think through problems without having to always ask staff for help.

Every day teachers quickly identify pupils who have not quite understood the ideas being taught. These pupils then spend time in 'keep up' sessions in the afternoons with either teachers or teaching assistants to help clear up any misconceptions. This means they are ready to move on with the rest of the class in the next lesson.

Pupils talked about changes in the way they are taught to read and how they are learning different ways of checking their own understanding of what they read. I saw pupils using these strategies successfully. A few pupils indicated that sometimes other pupils do not listen to them when they are the leader in their reading group. You are confident that the pupils will settle into the different roles in reading groups as they get used to the newly introduced system.

Governors have invested in new books and other reading materials and the pupils appreciate these. However, some of the older books are showing signs of wear and tear and you plan to replace book stocks as resources allow.

The new policy for marking and feedback is being used by all staff. I saw examples of how the marking policy has really helped pupils make progress. The pupils talked about how teachers' marking is helping them to improve their work.

You have appointed new subject leaders and provided ample training and development for them, alongside existing subject leaders. Subject leaders now have a very clear understanding of their roles. They are quickly developing skills to support teachers and teaching assistants to implement the new approaches properly. They check how pupils are responding in lessons and are able to quickly fine-tune the systems so that school improvement work has the best impact.

The action plan addresses all the areas for improvement identified in the last report, and other areas identified by the school. It is clear and is being monitored by you, all leaders and the governing body. However, the plan does not have measurable targets, so governors cannot categorically confirm that actions always have the intended impact. Introducing targets that can be measured and that match the ambition you have for the pupils would support the governors to check and challenge the progress the school is making.

External support

The local authority has supported the school to find leaders who will help move the school forward and is continuing to support through the provision of relevant training for teachers and other staff. As executive headteacher you have used the specialist leaders in education from Swinton Fitzwilliam Primary School, the other school you lead, to support the continued improvement of teaching and learning at Brinsworth Manor Junior School.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.

Yours sincerely

Susan Hayter
Her Majesty's Inspector