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30 November 2015

Mrs Michelle Mahoney
Edenthorpe Hall Primary School
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Doncaster
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Dear Mrs Mahoney

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Edenthorpe Hall Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 6 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 June 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. The school should take immediate action to:

- focus on improving outcomes for all pupils throughout the school
- improve communication with parents
- appoint parent representatives onto the governing body

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, senior leaders, a member of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a local headteacher who is currently supporting the school to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. You accompanied me on a

learning walk round the school during which we looked at progress and standards in pupils' writing and mathematics books. I spent time in the dining hall and in the playground observing pupils' behaviour and talking to pupils. I received and took note of eight letters of complaint from parents during the inspection.

Context

Since the last inspection the acting headteacher has been appointed as the permanent post-holder. The deputy headteacher has left the school and been replaced by a new assistant headteacher who took up post in September 2015. Both middle leaders are on maternity leave and a third permanent teacher is currently on leave. The Reception teacher was moved to Year 5 for September and from the beginning of November has moved to Year 1. Three temporary teachers were appointed to fill the positions in September 2015, of whom two left the school in October 2015 when two new temporary teachers joined the school. There have been significant changes to the governing body.

Main findings

Significant instability in teaching staff is the major factor in the school's failure to move forward since the last inspection. Two temporary teachers appointed for September are no longer at the school and further changes to the staffing structure mean that three classes have had new teachers from November 2015. The headteacher has spent much of her time and energy on solving staffing issues and, as a result, work on improving outcomes for pupils has not been prioritised nor effective. Action plans for key subjects are not completed and monitoring is not always recorded.

The headteacher, in her quest to solve some of the staffing issues, and with the backing of senior leaders, governors and the local authority, planned to merge two classes. However, this did not happen. The school's recent communication with parents during this time of turbulence has resulted in a minority of parents losing confidence in the way decisions are made at the school.

As a result of the recent structural changes to the governing body, many governors are new to post and lack the necessary skills to monitor and evaluate the action leaders are taking to improve the school. However, minutes of governing body meetings show that challenge is being provided by the chair, who notes that some of the work displayed around school is not at a high enough level. At present the governing body does not include any parent governors; this is now being addressed by leaders.

The increased focus on monitoring teaching, learning and assessment has led to changes in staffing. However, the development of current staff is not being addressed quickly enough. Marking systems are not followed and strategies to improve basic skills in mathematics are not used regularly. Work displayed on one

classroom wall from September is of a much higher quality than any work seen in the pupils' books. In another class, the same level of mathematics work is given to all pupils at all ability levels and this is not being picked up by leaders.

External moderation of July 2015 writing assessments for Year 2 concluded that there were insufficient pieces to make many secure judgements of Levels 2 and 3. The Year 2 results are therefore much lower than in previous years. Leaders have failed to use this information to ensure that clear expectations of writing quality are in place. Evidence in writing books shows a significant lack of extended writing.

Evidence seen at the time of the inspection shows there have been improvements in behaviour. All teachers are using the new behaviour strategy. A new tracking system is supporting leaders in recording and reporting incidents. However, more analysis of the information is needed to inform the next steps to improving behaviour further. The behaviour policy needs updating to reflect the new changes.

Pupils told me they enjoy coming to school and feel safe. Behaviour at lunchtime and at breaktime was calm and pupils played well together. The impact of work on developing behaviours for learning was evident during our walk round the classes. In some classes the impact was not as marked, pupils were not as engaged with their learning and work was not challenging enough.

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

External support

Since October the school has been supported by the local Hungerhill pyramid of schools. A local headteacher is working alongside the headteacher for half a day a week and the school is accessing two specialist leaders of learning to work alongside senior managers. It is too soon to judge the impact of the work. However, initial indications are that work on learning behaviours is making a positive difference. The local authority has provided a significant amount of support and challenge to the school and is part-funding the current support. The local authority recognises the urgent need for improvements and has categorised the school as requiring careful monitoring and additional support to accelerate change.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Lunn
Her Majesty's Inspector