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Mr Stephen Lawler-Smith
Headteacher
Moorside Primary School
Holdsworth Street
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Salford
Greater Manchester
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Dear Mr Lawler-Smith

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Moorside Primary School, Salford

Following my visit to your school on 6 May 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 February 2014. 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:

- refine the action plan so that it includes explicit targets for attainment at Key Stages 1 and 2 and clear cross references to other plans, such as the governors' improvement plan and subject-specific plans.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, a group of Year 6 pupils and a representative of the local authority. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school action plan and examined a range of other documents, including the school development plan,

records of lesson monitoring that you have conducted since the inspection and minutes of governors' meetings. I also examined the single central record of staff.

Context

Since the inspection in February of this year, the school has increased in size from 475 to 486 pupils. By September, you expect this number to rise to 560. You have recently appointed two new teaching assistants and are in the process of extending your staff to include two new assistant headteachers and five teachers who will take up post at the beginning of next term.

Main findings

You, your colleagues and governors recognise that the school requires improvement and you have a shared ambition to ensure that it is good by the end of the next academic year.

Your action plan focuses appropriately on the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report. It outlines the actions to be taken, who will be responsible for making sure that they have been implemented, how you will check on this and what improvements you expect to see. It gives a clear indication of how much improvement you expect to see in the quality of teaching but does not include specific targets for pupils' attainment and progress. It does not include cross-references to other significant plans, such as those for literacy and numeracy. The governors are in the process of drawing up their own action plan. However, it is not clear how that will relate to the post-inspection action plan.

Since the inspection, you have conducted detailed discussions with your staff on how to improve practice and your teaching and learning policies are being refined to ensure a more consistent approach across the school. You and your deputy have observed every teacher and several teaching assistants at work and your evaluations suggest that the quality of teaching is improving in line with your targets.

You have conducted a detailed examination of pupils' progress and, in the case of those who are not doing as well as they should, you have notified their parents and teachers and provided additional help for them. On the advice of an external consultant, you have revised the marking policy and are working with two further consultants to produce action plans for improving standards in literacy and numeracy.

You have drawn up a new management structure where phase leaders will play a crucial role in promoting high quality teaching and learning in particular year groups. You have also revised the performance management policy to make each member of staff more accountable for the learning and progress of the pupils in their care.

The pupils to whom I spoke said that they have seen clear improvements since the inspection. Lessons are now more interesting, targets are clear, teachers' explanations are easier to understand and, through the 'steps to success' and the additional help they receive, they are now able to tackle harder work than in the past. Marking is more detailed and they now have to re-do work if it is not of a high enough standard. These pupils were also very enthusiastic about the wider range of activities available to them outside as well as within school time.

You have succeeded in making these improvements despite the considerable additional demands made on you by the recent and very rapid rise in pupil numbers.

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

External support

The local authority recognises that the decision not to phase in the expansion of the school has put considerable pressures on you and your colleagues. However, it is now providing additional support directly or through brokered arrangements with other agencies and you are making good use of this help.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Salford.

Yours sincerely

Aelwyn Pugh

Her Majesty's Inspector