

PROTECT-INSPECTION



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Linda Payne
Interim Headteacher
Kingsway Junior School
Briar Road
Watford
WD25 0JH

Dear Mrs Payne

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Kingsway Junior School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 September 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to Margaret Conlon, your consultant headteacher, Jenny Sherry, the headteacher-designate, and Christine Stephens, Chair of the Governing Body, for the positive contribution they all made to this inspection.

The previous headteacher resigned in April 2012 and the governing body appointed a headteacher-designate following a competitive interview process. The governing body sought support from the local authority and an experienced headteacher was seconded from her successful headship of a local school, on a part-time basis, for the autumn term. She is ably supported by a very experienced consultant headteacher who is a member of the local authority team. The headteacher-designate will take up her post 1 January 2013. Two newly qualified teachers were appointed at the start of the September term 2012. The interim leadership team had been in post for only five working days when this inspection took place.

As a result of the inspection on 2 February 2012, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter. Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making **satisfactory** progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Pupil progress remained weak throughout the summer term 2012. The unvalidated results of the 2012 Key Stage 2 national tests, supplied by the school, remain below and, in some instances, substantially below the 2011 national figures. Weaknesses in the quality of teaching during the previous school year resulted in a below-average

percentage of Year 6 pupils making the expected progress in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.

It is hard to see how the achievement evidence available from Raise Online and the school's data could be judged as 'satisfactory' at the time of the February 2012 inspection. HMI reviewed the pupils' written work in Year 3 and found little evidence of the Key Stage 1 levels of attainment awarded in the feeder school.

It is essential that the school establishes a robust assessment database that can provide clear evidence of rising standards and increased pupil progress by the time of the next school inspection.

HMI observed five lessons or parts of lessons; one lesson was judged to be good, three required improvement, and one was found to be inadequate. The inspector invited the interim and consultant headteachers and the deputy headteacher to join the evaluation of teaching; the opinions they gave matched the judgements given by HMI. The most effective teaching provided engaging tasks and appropriate questioning that secured accurate pupil responses and stimulated independent work. In those lessons that required improvement, questioning failed to generate high-level responses and opportunities were missed to help pupils see what they needed to do to improve. One lesson was judged to be inadequate because the pace and challenge provided was insufficient and inaccurate examples were used by the teacher that confused the pupils. It should be noted that all staff were new to their classes; however, the proportion of good teaching available must be notably higher at the next inspection.

Pupil behaviour was often good and Year 3 pupils had settled well in to their new school routines. Some inconsistent behaviour was noted in Years 4 and 5, which had a detrimental impact on learning. Attendance in the previous academic year was in line with the national average.

The first area for improvement noted in the previous inspection report linked underachievement and weaknesses in teaching to the work of subject leaders; the ultimate responsibility of any headteacher. The previous leadership team were unable to arrest the decline in standards and achievement between 2010 and 2012. Similarly, the inspection report criticised governance for failing to hold the school to account. However, the governing body has moved swiftly to appoint a new headteacher following the resignation of the previous incumbent and worked effectively with the local authority to ensure that a strong interim leadership team is in place for the autumn term 2012. A new Chair of the Governing Body took up her role in January 2012 and the local authority has seconded an experienced governor to the governing body. HMI examined the school's single central record and found that the employment checks conducted meet current government requirements.

The local authority's statement of action was found to be fit for purpose by Ofsted and the action plan provides appropriate emphasis on raising standards and

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improving teaching. The support provided by the local authority in securing the appointment of a new headteacher, a strong interim leadership team and by the strengthening of the governing body, has been a particularly effective response to the weaknesses identified by the previous inspection.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2012

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills of subject leaders further so they play a more active part in monitoring the quality of teaching and give teachers clear guidance on how to improve pupils' progress
 - extending the monitoring role of the governing body to all areas of the school's work and so increase the level of challenge they offer to school leaders and managers.

- In order to accelerate pupils' progress, improve the quality of teaching so that at least 80% is good or better by the end of this academic year by:
 - making consistent use of assessment information to match work to pupils' ability, especially improving challenge for the more able
 - ensuring pupils know and use their personal targets to improve their work and identify what they need to learn next
 - ensuring introductions to lessons are efficient and pupils begin their learning activities promptly
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing and mathematical skills across the curriculum.