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16 November 2012
Mrs Egan
Headteacher
Icknield Infant and Nursery School
Archers Way
Letchworth Garden City
SG6 4UN

Dear Mrs Egan

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Icknield Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 16 November 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 18-19 September 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, middle leaders the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan and documentation were evaluated. The inspector observed staff working with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and talked to pupils in Year 2 about their work. Discussions were held with the subject leaders for literacy and numeracy.

Context

The school has appointed a newly qualified teacher to work in a Reception class. Two teachers are currently on leave due to illness and their posts are being covered by the deputy headteacher and a teacher on a temporary contract. All vacancies on the governing body have been filled.

Main findings

Discussions with school leaders and a review of school improvement planning confirm that there is now a greater focus on raising pupil achievement in writing and

mathematics. Staff working with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage plan learning experiences for children in the outdoor areas that are more purposeful. Middle leaders with responsibility for literacy and numeracy have implemented several initiatives to improve the quality of learning in Key Stage 1. This is leading to greater levels of consistency in teaching. There remain variations in practice between classes, evident in the quality of teachers' marking and the setting of targets for pupils.

The headteacher and senior staff monitor the quality of teaching and learning regularly and findings are used effectively to inform both school self-evaluation and performance management. Governors participate fully in monitoring the work of the school through regular links with subject leaders. This gives them a clear insight into the progress made on areas of improvement and aspects of strength such as reading. Oversight of performance management is secure. A well designed induction package supports the development of new governors.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- fully implement the priorities identified within the plan for school improvement
- ensure that school leaders at all levels monitor the quality of learning experiences for all pupils to ensure teaching and learning is consistently good across the school.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection. A further visit will be made by HMI to monitor the quality and consistency of teaching in literacy and numeracy.

External support

The local authority has put in place a specific programme of support. It includes regular reviews by local authority improvement officers to ensure that the school quickly tackles the key issues from the inspection to secure the necessary improvements in pupils' outcomes.

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

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

PROTECT-INSPECTION



- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority
- the academy chain where relevant
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.