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3 December 2012

Mrs Joan Adamson
Grindon Infant School
Gleneagles Road
Sunderland
Tyne and Wear
SR4 9QN

Dear Mrs Adamson

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

Following my visit to your school on 30 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 September 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, members of the senior management team, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a provider of external support chosen by the school. During the visit, the inspector evaluated the school's improvement plans and looked at data on pupils' progress and monitoring information on teaching and learning.

Context

There have been no changes to the school's staffing. One member of staff is on long term sickness absence. There have been no changes to the governing body which currently has three vacancies, two of which are for parent governors.

Main findings

The school has made a secure start in tackling the weaknesses in pupils' progress and in the leadership of teaching that were identified by the last inspection. A revised school improvement plan includes all aspects that were judged to require improvement. The planned actions are appropriate but it is not as clear as it should be how senior leaders and the governing body will be able to measure success in the short and medium term. This is because there is no clear link between the actions and the impact they will have on pupil progress. There is also some lack of clarity about who has overall responsibility for implementing different action points and evaluating the impact.

Senior leaders are beginning to implement more rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school including more regular opportunities for scrutiny by governors. Governors are kept well informed by senior leaders and they are ambitious for the school. However, they do not always have the knowledge and understanding of information about pupil performance that they need to challenge senior leaders more and hold them to account. The chair is aware of this and the need for the governors to receive more training so that they can improve this aspect of their work.

There is a positive climate for change within the school and everyone who spoke with me indicated their commitment to becoming a good school as quickly as possible.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take 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:

- strengthen the school's improvement plan by: including measurable criteria, focused on pupil progress, against which success can be judged in the short and medium term; identifying clearly who has overall responsibility for implementing each piece of action; and clarifying which members of staff and the governing body will evaluate progress and hold people to account for improvements
- secure bespoke training for members of the governing body so that they can better understand information on pupil performance and use it to hold senior leaders to account
- secure a full complement of governors as soon as possible.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

A representative of the local authority has met with the headteacher to talk about the recent inspection and to find out what, if any, support might be needed.

The school has chosen to make selective use of the local authority support available to them and is in the process of brokering the services of an external consultant.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Brown

Her Majesty's Inspector