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21 November 2012

Ms S. Elliott
Headteacher
Milford Junior School
Glenthorne Avenue
Yeovil
Somerset
BA21 4PG

Dear Ms Elliott

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Milford Junior School, Somerset

Following my visit to your school on 21 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, I held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, several members of the Governing Body, representatives of the local authority and a National Leader of Education who has supported the school since before the previous inspection. The school development plan was evaluated. Other documentation was looked at including the outcomes from senior leaders' recent observations of teaching and learning in lessons and the school's review of pupils' progress.

Context

There have been few changes in the school since the previous inspection. One governor has left the governing body and been replaced.

Main findings

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher took up their current posts immediately before the previous section 5 inspection. They have set about communicating their ambition for the school by raising expectations of the progress that pupils should make. They have acted swiftly to ensure that actions taken to tackle the areas for improvement and quicken the pace of improvement are built on firm foundations. Immediately after the inspection, senior leaders involved all teachers, support staff and governors in a thorough review of the School Development Plan to focus on the key issues identified in the report. The school development plan states clearly what difference planned actions are expected to make to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching, although how progress will be evaluated and reported on is not clear enough.

Systems to check on pupils' attainment and progress now identify the performance of individuals and groups more clearly. This is enabling leaders to monitor the progress towards end-of-year targets closely and with greater accuracy. All teachers are involved in evaluating and improving teaching by observing a colleague's practice and then being observed themselves. Senior leaders are also monitoring the quality of teaching. Lesson observations are recorded more consistently and comments are specific about the progress that pupils are making. The governing body has set clear expectations for how all governors should monitor the school's work, but they have not undertaken a self-evaluation of governance.

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:

- fine-tune the school development plan to ensure that everyone understands how actions will be evaluated and reported
- commission an external review of the governing body in order to identify what further support and training governors need.

HMI will explore the possibility of the school attending an Ofsted school improvement seminar. Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

At the time of the previous inspection the school was supported by a National Leader of Education as part of the local authority's model of school-to-school support. This support has continued since the previous inspection with a renewed focus towards addressing the areas for improvement in the inspection report. A link has been made with another school, that has improved over time to become a good school, so that additional support can be provided when needed. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are receiving training to develop their leadership roles which is

successfully helping them to consider different way of tackling the school's weaknesses.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector