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10 December 2012

Gemma Elliott
Castlefields Infant School
Field Top Road
Rastrick
Brighouse
West Yorkshire
HD6 3XB

Dear Ms Elliott

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

Following my visit to your school on 10 December 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 and other senior leaders, representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and an independent consultant who works with school. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the recent inspection, which judged the school to require improvement.

Main findings

The school's leaders accept that the outcomes and priorities from the recent inspection are the right ones. The governing body recognises the need to develop

their role further. The school's improvement plan has been adapted to take full account of the findings of the inspection and actions are suitably focused on tackling the areas for improvement identified. For example, a review of governance is planned for the spring term to enable governors to identify how they can increase the level of challenge they provide for the school. Professional development activities including whole-staff training, peer observations and school visits are planned to help address the weaker elements of teachers' practice that were identified during the inspection. Teachers' performance management targets have a consistent focus on addressing whole-school priorities. Some aspects of the improvement plan require refinement. For example, timescales for actions to be completed are imprecise and there are no milestones to enable the school's progress towards agreed success criteria to be evaluated. Monitoring activities, although planned, need to be focused more systematically on checking the impact of on-going improvement activity.

The school has been proactive in encouraging more parents to complete Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View. Early evidence suggests that parents and carers have a more positive view of the school: for example, most of those who completed the questionnaire feel that the school is well led and managed, and that the school responds to their concerns.

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 an external review of governance and that plans are implemented with urgency to speed up the pace of improvement.

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

External support

A new local authority officer has begun to work with the school's leaders to support improvement. He has met with the headteacher to review the school's 2012 results and identified some useful points for consideration, such as the need to look more closely at the progress of pupils of different ability. In order to facilitate school improvement the local authority is beginning to help the school's leaders to develop links with other local schools. However, this initiative is at an early stage of development. Plans are also in place for the external consultant, appointed by the school, to provide an external view on teaching quality in the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli
Her Majesty's Inspector