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Mrs K Perez
Headteacher
Thorley Hill Primary School
Park Lane
Bishop's Stortford
CM23 3NH

Dear Mrs Perez

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Thorley Hill Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 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 October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated alongside a range of other self-evaluation and monitoring documents.

Context

There have been no changes to the staffing since the previous inspection. There are currently three vacancies on the governing body.

Main findings

A well-designed action plan provides a clear structure for school improvement. Actions have been prioritised effectively to address all the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Responsibilities are clearly identified within specific timescales to facilitate rapid improvement. However, these actions are yet to be fully reflected in classroom practice throughout the school to ensure that all pupils

achieve well and especially in their writing. Although appropriate targets are set within the action plan they are not high enough to ensure all pupils make good or better progress in English and mathematics.

Discussions with school leaders and those with specific responsibility for leading the teaching of English and mathematics confirm that there is a sharper focus on improving the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils in all classes. All staff with a leadership responsibility undertake observations of lessons and play a greater role in monitoring pupil progress and teacher performance.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The Governing Body has implemented clear strategies to monitor the progress of the action plan and its impact on pupil progress. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- ensure that targets within the action plan are sufficiently challenging to raise standards further in English and mathematics
- that HMI undertake a further monitoring visit alongside school leaders to review the quality of teaching and learning across Key Stage 2.

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

External support

The local authority provides appropriate levels of support and guidance to staff and governors including specific training for teachers. Local authority improvement officers maintain a close overview of the school to ensure that it 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.

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector