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Susan Bowditch
Heath Primary School, Kesgrave
Bell Lane
Kesgrave
Ipswich
IP5 1JG

Dear Mrs Bowditch

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Heath Primary School, Kesgrave

Following my visit to your school on 14 January 2013, 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 on 24 October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, the chair of the Governing Body and representatives of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated together with details of the lesson observation system and governors meeting minutes. A sample of classes in years 2,3,4,5 and 6 was visited to evaluate learning.

Context

There have been no significant changes to the school's context since the last inspection

Main findings

The school is making significant improvements to the effectiveness with which it monitors teaching and learning. Teachers now assess pupils' work systematically and accurately. This gives teachers a good view of how well pupils are doing. Because of this, lessons can be planned effectively to ensure that they are pitched at the right

level so that all pupils are stimulated to learn. This is done well in a significant number of classes, and is exemplary in Year 6 where pupils learn exceptionally well. In one Year 6 class, pupils demonstrated the skills of independent learning very well and many were around two terms ahead of age-related attainment in mathematics. Teachers do plan thoroughly, but sometimes this is done in too much unnecessary detail.

The school's lesson observation system is accurate and identifies issues that need to be tackled across the whole school. It monitors teaching well but sometimes misses opportunities to fully evaluate learning. For example it is not sufficiently well-developed to identify whether the level of what is being taught is demanding enough, especially for the most able. Much relevant professional development has been undertaken since the last inspection. The school has accurately identified the variability in teaching quality noted at the last inspection and seen in Key Stage 1.

The school has a good understanding of the issues that are holding it back from being 'good'. Its self-evaluation is accurate and comprehensive, closely detailing areas for improvement. However the action plans that should accompany it are not yet well-developed. They lack clear targets. Managers have not yet identified staff to be accountable for ensuring that the school meets challenging targets necessary to bring the school to 'good' as quickly as possible.

Governors work well with school staff in a productive and supportive relationship that has at times in the past been challenging of the school. On occasion, they have effectively supported the headteacher and her deputy in tackling weak performance. However they have not yet ensured that targets for improvement following inspection are sufficiently precise. This means that progress towards them cannot yet be accurately monitored. In addition, training in school performance data has not been undertaken for some time and as a consequence they are too dependent on analyses and data provided by senior leaders.

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:

- Ensure that detailed post-inspection action plans with clear targets are developed as quickly as possible, and that associated monitoring of progress towards targets is rigorous and frequent especially at Key Stage 1.
- Ensure that all staff are very clear about their own accountability to meet targets for the improvement of the school and that performance is managed accordingly.
- Enable at least one governor to undertake training in the analyses of school performance data so that governors are able to challenge all school staff more effectively.

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

External support

The school is receiving support from the local authority in areas involving those pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, and in Key Stage 1 and the early Years Foundation Stage. The school is gaining experience from visiting nearby outstanding schools, for example in the checking of lesson observation accuracy. HMI recommend that senior leaders visit a school where they can observe existing systems for the robust monitoring of progress towards performance targets.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Seath
Her Majesty's Inspector