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7 February 2013

Christopher Wilson
North Clifton Primary School
Church Lane
North Clifton
Newark
Nottinghamshire
NG23 7AP

Dear Mr Wilson

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to North Clifton Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 01 February 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 28 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority. A draft of the school improvement plan was evaluated. A tour of the school was undertaken during which the teaching staff were introduced.

Context

One member of staff is currently on maternity leave and another has a long-term absence following an injury. A temporary teacher is covering both vacancies.

Main findings

The school is developing effective systems for assessment and tracking pupil progress with some excellent aspects, which are now being used across the school. This enables leaders, governors and teachers to have a good overview of progress. Lesson observations and work scrutiny are established and suitable records kept which inform professional development and performance management. The school development plan has been re-drafted in the light of the inspection and contains many useful elements. It does not, however, provide sufficient focus or clarity in its strategic goals.

Members of the governing body have a sound grasp of their role in monitoring and challenge, and a good range of skills and experience. Recent work has enabled them to follow the impact of additional support provided to specific pupils.

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:

- provide greater clarity in the strategic goals for development, so that the main priorities for improvement can be quickly identified and understood by all
- establish a 'North Clifton' strategy for teaching and learning that supports all teachers to deliver lessons that are consistently good.

HMI will provide further support in the form of:

- an evaluation of the school development plan via email
- an invitation to the headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body to attend an Ofsted seminar for schools that require improvement
- organising and accompanying a day for the headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body to visit two outstanding small rural schools to explore good practice in mixed-age teaching
- arranging an evening seminar for the governing body and senior leaders about the effective use of performance data in a very small school.

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

External support

The school is supported by a school improvement partner from the local authority, who was attached to the school in September 2012. Following the inspection outcome, a link was brokered by the local authority with a Local Leader in Education at Kinoulton Primary School, an outstanding provider in a similar context. Initial visits have taken place, and leaders and staff are optimistic about the potential for this to inject momentum to North Clifton's improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

John Peckham

Her Majesty's Inspector