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Miriam Piper
Headteacher
Hartford Community Junior School
Mayfield Crescent
Huntingdon
PE29 1UL

6 February 2013

Dear Mrs Piper

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Hartford Community Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 5 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 in November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, subject leaders for English and mathematics, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. The raising achievement plan (RAP) was evaluated. The headteacher and deputy headteacher conducted HMI on a short tour of the school.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection the subject leader for mathematics has joined the senior leadership team. There have been no other contextual changes.

Main findings

The school is clearly focused on getting to good. Staff are embracing the necessary changes to raise pupils' achievement. Leaders have pressed ahead with the RAP. Actions are well-chosen to address weaknesses, although a few need re-wording to make them explicit. Timescales are realistic so that staff are not overburdened.

Leaders in English and mathematics are pivotal in driving improvement. However, other subject leaders' skills are underused. They are not identifying ways to promote literacy and numeracy across subjects. Senior leaders ensure that everyone shares responsibility for pupils' progress. They are determined to sustain the energetic pace of change. However, to build on the favourable start on its journey to good, the school is not planning far enough ahead.

Senior leaders check the quality of teaching and learning regularly and follow up with formal and informal monitoring to check for progress. The astute governing body is at ease in challenging the school. Governors expect goals to be met. They do not hesitate to illicit answers from the leadership team if evidence of progress is fragile. Extra funding for eligible pupils (Pupil Premium) is allocated to accomplish better outcomes for them. The governing body is involved in the headteacher's annual appraisal but is not as well informed about arrangements for other staff.

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 recommends that further action is taken to:

- extend the RAP beyond the end of this school year maintain the momentum of improvement and use time before the next inspection advantageously
- use the expertise of all subject leaders to identify opportunities for pupils to apply and practise their literacy and numeracy skills across the full range of subjects
- familiarise the governing body with arrangements for managing staff performance.

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

External support

The local authority has provided a range of support and advice over time, particularly in coaching the school's leadership. This has energised the leadership team who are less reliant on external support as a result. Even so, the local authority checks the school's progress against the RAP at regular intervals.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Learning for Cambridgeshire.

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman
Her Majesty's Inspector