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13 February 2013

Ms K Gilzene
Headteacher
Waterfield Primary School
Waterfield Gardens
Crawley
RH11 8RA

Dear Ms Gilzene,

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

Following my visit to your school on 13 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 other senior leaders, members of the governing body, and representatives of the local authority. The school improvement and action plans were evaluated along with other documentation relating to monitoring and evaluation of teaching and progress.

Context

There have been no significant changes to the school staff since the section 5 inspection. The governing body is understrength with 4 vacancies and an acting Chair of Governors, replacing the previous Chair who left in January 2013.

Main findings

The headteacher and senior team have started addressing the areas for improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection through a focus on

developing consistency of good practice in teaching and improved interpretation of data on pupils' performance. Recent intensive monitoring of classroom practice is now being followed by a period of reflection to encourage teachers to put into practice strategies to improve any identified areas for development. The school is now more able to identify which pupils or classes are making the best progress and which may need additional support.

The school's planning for improvement is based around several different documents and is, as a result, overly complex and difficult to interpret or track progress. While there is evidence of improvement since the inspection in areas such as raising the quality of teaching, the pace of this is not supported by focused action planning with a clear timeline and identifiable key steps along the way.

The school experiences difficulties in filling governor vacancies including the Chair of Governors position. The local authority has organised support for the governors through the work of a consultant governor from another school and this is helping to improve their skills. Governors are frequently monitoring provision at classroom level and reporting back to the governing body. However some lack experience in their strategic role and this means they are not sufficiently focused on monitoring the school's overall progress against the issues from inspection.

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:

- refine action planning to prioritise the key issues from the inspection and include a clear timetable showing key steps along way to becoming a good school
- develop the skills of the governing body to check the school's progress against its action plan.

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

External support

The local authority is providing timely and effective support for the school through supporting the headteacher when she was new in her role as well as currently organising a consultant governor to support the governing body. The school has organised additional outside support such consultants to help develop a creative curriculum as well as improving mathematics in the school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex.

Yours sincerely

Christine Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector