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4 March 2013

Lea Mason
The Horncastle St Lawrence School
Bowl Alley Lane
Horncastle
LN9 5EJ

Dear Mrs Mason

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to The Horncastle St Lawrence School

Following my visit to your school on 4 March 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 6 December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the executive principal, the head of site members of the school leadership teams and the Governing Body. A range of information was reviewed, including data concerning pupils' attainment, progress and behaviour, and the school's improvement plans. Visits were made to three lessons.

Context

There have not been any significant changes to the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection. There have been some changes to teaching staff, with some temporary arrangements in place until permanent appointments can be made.

Main findings

Good progress has been made in developing rigorous procedures to collect and evaluate information about pupils' attainment, progress and behaviour. Senior

leaders use this information effectively to monitor the quality of teaching and support.

Pupils' targets set high expectations and are based on available national data. There are improved arrangements for ensuring accurate baseline assessment, including more rigorous moderation within school and with other schools.

Performance management of staff is more thorough and includes information from the monitoring of the quality of planning and teaching, and about pupils' progress. A more rigorous approach is being used when considering the progression of teachers through the upper pay threshold.

Joint observations of teaching undertaken with senior managers indicate that the school has an accurate picture of its quality. Effective action is being taken to address areas requiring improvement, including through the strong support provided by the school's middle leaders. This includes working closely with temporary staff, modelling good practice by team teaching and monitoring the quality of teachers' planning and pupils' individual learning plans.

Governors have received further training since the last inspection and are now more skilled in providing effective support and challenge. They have a very good understanding of the changes being made.

There is a comprehensive improvement plan for addressing the issues identified at the last inspection. This plan details the actions that will be undertaken, however does not focus sufficiently on the intended impact of these actions on pupils' progress.

The progress of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government for pupils at risk of underachievement) is monitored. However the effectiveness of the use of this additional funding is not thoroughly evaluated.

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 recommend that further action is taken to:

- improve improvement planning to identify the intended impact on pupils' progress, where possible
- evaluate the effectiveness of the use of pupil premium funding.

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

External support

The local authority has a good understanding of the changes being made by the school and has provided effective support, where required. The visiting adviser monitors data about pupils' progress and has undertaken joint observations of teaching to support the school's own judgements. Specialist advisers have provided training and guidance, for example regarding literacy teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Charlie Henry
Her Majesty's Inspector