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Mrs Gill Ramsay
Headteacher
Kilnhurst St Thomas CofE Primary School
Meadow View Road
Kilnhurst
Mexborough
South Yorkshire
S64 5UA

Dear Mrs Ramsay

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Kilnhurst St Thomas CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 20 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 December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plans were evaluated along with other school documentation including records from lesson observations and the headteacher's report to the governing body.

Context

There have been a small number of changes to the school's context since it was inspected in December 2012. One class teacher is absent on maternity leave and the class is now taught by a teacher who has moved from another class. Two new teachers have been recruited to cover the absence created by transferring staff and to deal with the generally rising number of pupils at the school. There are plans to build an additional classroom at the school. Two new governors have been recruited.

Main findings

The post inspection action plan includes all of the areas which were judged to require improvement. It identifies clear and often measurable success criteria and appropriate actions. However, time frames tend to focus on the immediate term and do not pace actions across the whole year or beyond. Some arrangements for checking on the implementation of improvements are evident. However, the arrangements for monitoring the impact of planned improvements on teaching and learning over time do not always clearly identify what will be checked, or how and when this will be done. Additionally, the role of governors in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the actions being taken is not explicit in relation to all of the areas for improvement. Improvements since the last inspection include a sharper focus on what pupils will learn in lessons, which are now typically presented to pupils as 'what we are learning to do today.'

All teachers have been involved in a self-assessment of their own teaching skills. This, complemented by the headteacher's first hand observations, has resulted in a clear overview of the quality of teaching and individual actions for improvement are being planned.

Governors understand that there is room for improvement and are keen to become involved in supporting development at the school. They identify the need for greater rigour in the setting of performance management targets along with regular reviews of progress. The headteacher's termly report to the governing body has been enhanced to provide governors with a good level of detail related to the attainment and progress of pupils and the quality of teaching. This means that they are now better placed to develop their role in challenging the work of the school. However, some individual governors identify that they need further training in order to fully exercise their role of challenging and supporting the work of senior leaders and staff.

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 developments are planned to cover the whole year and possibly beyond
- improve the arrangements for monitoring the impact of the planned improvements by identifying what will be checked, when it will be checked and by whom
- ensure that governors conduct regular evaluations of the planned improvements.

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

External support

The local authority has provided good support for the school since the last inspection. This has included brokering some well-targeted support from educational consultants to work with individual teachers and supported the development of links with other local schools. Although still at the early stages this is showing promise in developing the skills of individual teachers and leaders.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Rotherham and the Director of Education for the Diocese of Sheffield.

Yours sincerely

Amraz Ali

Her Majesty's Inspector