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26 March 2013

Mr Gavin Hayman
Headteacher
Kings Copse Primary School
Kings Copse Road,
Southampton
SO30 0PQ

Dear Mr Hayman

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

Following my visit to your school on 25th 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body and a parent governor, and a representative from the local authority. The inspector spoke to a group of pupils, undertook a learning walk with the headteacher and looked at a range of school documentation including the post-Ofsted action plan.

Context

There have been no significant changes to the context of the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

Main findings

Leaders and managers have been quick to respond to the areas in need of improvement. There is a detailed post-Ofsted action plan that identifies clear timescales, actions needed and the progress the school hopes to make. Although there are intended outcomes for pupils included in the plan there is not enough focus on different groups of pupils and how their progress will be measured.

Staff and governors are now more focused on the learning and progress of pupils. The headteacher is empowering senior leaders to develop their role and this is having a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning, including for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Consequently, expectations are rising; teachers are improving the quality of their marking and are making better use of assessment information, particularly in mathematics to plan lessons that meet the learning needs of all pupils. There are more opportunities for pupils to read during the course of the school day. Some initiatives are still in their infancy and have yet to be securely and consistently well embedded across the school.

The quality of teaching, learning and planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not being monitored closely enough to ensure that expectations are sufficiently high, particularly in writing, and that the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are always fully reflected in daily planning.

The quality of the learning environment around the school has significantly improved. Pupils told the inspector how much they appreciate the high quality reading books that are now available to them. They welcome their teachers taking more time to explain new concepts and the increased use of practical resources, particularly in their mathematics lessons.

Leaders and managers track the progress of pupils more frequently. However, they have yet to all make good use of average point scores, especially to compare the performance of different groups of pupils. Although governors are developing their role and are supportive of the school they do not always challenge the school as well as they could and would benefit from an audit of their training needs.

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:

- Refine the school's post-Ofsted action plan so that it focuses more sharply on different groups of pupils.
- Ensure all children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in writing, and that the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are fully reflected in daily planning.

- Develop the use of average point scores, so that all leaders and managers use this information to compare the performance of different groups of pupils.
- Strengthen the governing body by undertaking an audit of their training needs, so that they are better able to challenge the school about its performance, particularly about the progress made by different groups of pupils in English and mathematics.

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

External support

The school makes effective use of the good support provided by the local authority. This is helping the mathematics leader in particular to develop his role and staff are also improving the quality of their practice in teaching mathematics. Senior leaders appreciate the clear next steps recorded in the local authority's reports of visits. The literacy leader values the support and challenge provided by the literacy adviser. The Leadership and Learning Partner provides senior leaders with strong support to help them improve the quality of their action planning, set challenging targets and analyse data.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier
Her Majesty's Inspector