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24 April 2013

Miss Mell Julian and Mrs Jenny Jaszczuk
Headteachers
Ashbrook Junior School
Victoria Avenue
Borrowash
Derby
DE72 3HF

Dear Miss Julian and Mrs Jaszczuk

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Ashbrook Junior School, Derbyshire local authority.

Following my visit to your school on 23 April 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 headteachers and other senior leaders, a representative of the local authority, and a group of pupils. A telephone conversation was held with the Chair of the Governing Body. The school improvement plans were evaluated.

Context

Since the recent inspection which judged the school to require improvement two new teachers have been appointed, including one senior teacher with responsibility for mathematics.

Main findings

Senior leaders have responded with urgency to the areas identified for improvement at the recent section 5 inspection. Action planning is precise, with clear milestones

and measurable success criteria against which the impact of actions can be systematically monitored and evaluated.

Senior leaders have raised expectations about the quality of teaching and learning. They have agreed with staff a number of 'non-negotiable' strategies for teaching and learning, re-organised units of work to link learning across subjects and enhance real-life learning experiences, and are beginning to consider more effective use of new technology. As a result, rates of progress are accelerating and pupils report enthusiastically that learning is more fun. All staff are benefitting from appropriate training and support provided by the school's local authority adviser and consultants. Recent training in the use of technology has improved staff confidence and is having a positive impact on the enjoyment and engagement of pupils.

The governing body has responded positively to the recommendations in the previous report and an external review of governance has been completed. Governors report that they found the review process supportive in beginning to develop their role. They have devised their own action plan and a clear annual timetable of events to monitor and evaluate the school's work. Members of the governing body are undertaking a range of training designed to make them better able to hold the headteachers and other leaders to account for their work. Governors are not as involved in improvement planning as much as they should be.

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:

- involve governors more fully at the early stages of improvement planning.

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

External support

The local authority adviser has a good knowledge of the school and his considerable support is acknowledged by the school as a key factor in the good progress the school is making. He has devised a focused plan of support which includes a significant number of consultant days and this is helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In addition, the local authority adviser is providing good support and guidance to the governing body which is well tailored to meet their needs.

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

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate

Her Majesty's Inspector