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Mr Jason Webster
Acting Headteacher
Lovers' Lane Primary and Nursery School
Warburton Street
Newark
NG24 1LT

Dear Mr Webster

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Lovers' Lane Primary and Nursery School, Nottinghamshire local authority.

Following my visit to your school on 17 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 December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the acting headteacher, a member of the senior leadership team, a representative of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority. The school's action plan and minutes from governing body meetings were evaluated.

Context

Since the last inspection, the headteacher and one part-time class teacher have been absent through illness. The deputy headteacher has become the acting headteacher during the period of the headteacher's absence.

Main findings

Senior leaders are tackling the school's weaknesses. Where teaching is less than good, appropriate actions are being taken to support and challenge staff to improve. Several partnerships have been established with local schools identified for their good practice. Leaders from partner schools have conducted joint observations of lessons with the acting headteacher to identify areas for improvement in teaching. These have helped him to identify clear targets to help teachers to become more effective. Leaders' records indicate that teaching is beginning to improve and attainment is rising as a result.

The acting headteacher has identified the key actions that need to be taken to address the issues outlined at the last inspection. An action plan has been devised and staff are aware of what they need to do to improve the effectiveness of the school. However, the plan is not as well constructed as it could be and requires some improvements. Although school leaders have set challenging targets with teachers to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement, these are not included in the action plan. Furthermore, the plan does not include clear milestones to enable leaders to check if pupils are on track to achieve their challenging targets, or if the quality of teaching is improving quickly enough. The plan does not identify who will check each action, when they will check it, or how they will do it.

The governing body has received suitable training to develop its understanding of how to check the work of the school more effectively. As a result, minutes from governing body meetings indicate that governors are beginning to ask more challenging questions of senior leaders. However, very few governors have the necessary skills to interpret information about pupils' performance, in order to ask challenging questions about pupils' achievement. The acting headteacher has agreed to lead a training session for governors on how to interpret school data about pupils' performance, and how to access and interpret Ofsted's 'data dashboard.' (This is a tool that will help governors to compare the school's performance with similar schools nationally).

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:

- improve the governing body's understanding of data about pupils' performance so they are able to ask more challenging questions of school leaders about the achievement of all pupils.

Improve the school's action plan by:

- focusing on the impact actions have on improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement
- setting clear milestones which will enable leaders, including the governing body, to gain a better understanding of how well improvements are being made over time
- identifying when each action will be checked, how it will be checked and who it will be checked by.

The school will submit the revised action plan to HMI by the end of April 2013.

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

External support

The local authority has provided effective support to the school since the last inspection. Arrangements were made for an experienced headteacher, from another school, to support the acting headteacher during the headteacher's absence. The extra support has enabled the acting headteacher to quickly become familiar with his new responsibilities and spend more time focusing on the school's priorities for improvement. The local authority adviser, assigned to the school, is providing appropriate support to help the acting headteacher to address the remaining weaknesses in teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Spencer
Her Majesty's Inspector