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22nd April 2013

Ms Melonie Brunton
Headteacher
The Middle Rasen Primary School
North Street
Middle Rasen
Market Rasen
LN8 3TS

Dear Ms Brunton

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to The Middle Rasen Primary School, Lincolnshire local authority.

Following my visit to your school on 18 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 headteacher, the senior teacher, the Chair and a member of the Governing Body and the school's education adviser. The school improvement plan was evaluated. The school's self-evaluations were discussed with senior leaders. In addition, short visits were made to a sample of lessons with the headteacher.

Context

Since the previous inspection in December 2012, there have been no significant changes in school leadership or staffing.

Main findings

During the visit we worked closely together to explore and identify the reasons why the school is not yet good. We agreed that accelerating the pace and progress of pupils' learning in lessons is key. Specific areas requiring further attention were identified. These included the need for consistently good teaching and learning across the school; especially in mathematics; and for the faster development of writing skills in Key Stage 1. We agreed that an external view will be important to check, moderate and endorse your own self-evaluations to ensure that they are accurate. The role of your education partner is critical here.

We also looked at the tracking of pupils' progress across the school and how it is measured. In the past, the school's expectations of progress have been too low but you have now adapted them to ensure the promotion of good progress levels across the school. Therefore, in future, targets will be based on most pupils gaining at least four average points per year in each subject.

Evaluations of the quality of learning require improvement because the observation process does not take enough account of the learning gains made in lessons. This makes it difficult for the school to know if there is sufficient learning happening in each lesson to generate the good progress that is required as pupils move through the school.

A post-inspection action plan has been written aimed at addressing the three recommendations from the last report and actions are underway. Monitoring of progress against the targets, however, has provided insufficiently accurate information as some targets were too vague. These targets were re-drafted during the monitoring visit to enable senior leaders and governors to monitor progress more effectively.

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, I recommend that further action is taken to:

- incorporate the post inspection plan into an overall improvement plan for the school
- accelerate progress in lessons by planning and then sharing with pupils success criteria designed to generate learning in a series of small steps
- maintain a tight focus on evaluating pupils' learning when observing lessons
- devise a programme of coaching and support aimed specifically at the teaching that requires improvement
- ensure that the governing body systematically checks the progress being made in achieving the targets that are described in the school improvement plan.

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

External support

The school's education adviser is relatively new to post, and yet has made a flying start. She already knows the school well, has a clear view of what is required in the school to secure good outcomes for pupils, and is already working with school leaders to achieve this. She has also carried out some invaluable work with governors to help them to understand the recommendations from the recent inspection and how to move the school forward. Plans are already in place for her to support the school in achieving all the action points described above.

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

Yours sincerely

Trevor Riddiough
Her Majesty's Inspector