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Mrs Kathryn Spragg
Headteacher
Priestthorpe Primary School
Mornington Road
Bingley
West Yorkshire
BD16 4JS

Dear Mrs Spragg

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Priestthorpe Primary School, Bradford

Following my visit to your school on 26 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, three senior leaders, two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and an external consultant (school improvement partner), commissioned by the school. The school's improvement plans and supporting documents were evaluated.

Context

Since the previous inspection, one governor has resigned. A new headteacher is due to be appointed for September 2013, following the resignation of the current headteacher.

Main findings

The school's post-Ofsted action plan is clearly focused on addressing the key areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection, notably to improve the quality of teaching, improve pupils' achievement and improve aspects of leadership and management. The plan includes intended actions, the personnel responsible for improvements, specific timescales and targets for review. Senior leaders recognise, however, that the plan does not set out precisely enough, in terms of regular measurable targets, what the school's expectations are to clearly indicate success over time.

Senior leaders have already taken a number of actions to improve the quality of teaching and, as a result, the school's most recent information on pupils' achievement indicates improvements in performance. Senior leaders have monitored closely the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement through focused lesson observations and the regular scrutiny of teachers' and pupils' work. Further actions have included: specific individual teacher support and coaching; a review of the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar in all year groups, and targeted support for phonics teaching in Key Stage 1. School leaders are also continuing to develop communication links with parents through the parents' forum and school website improvements.

The governing body monitors regularly the school's actions to improve teaching and pupils' achievement at both full and committee meetings, particularly the school improvement committee. A number of senior leaders and the school improvement partner have reported to the governing body. Governors have recently received training from the local authority on pupil achievement information, together with personnel support in preparation for the appointment of a new headteacher.

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 within one improvement plan, the impact of the school's work can be regularly and easily measured so that all personnel, school leaders and governors can rigorously monitor the success of the school's actions over time.

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

External support

Since the section 5 inspection, the local authority has provided regular support for school leaders, including governor training and advice from the human resources department. School leaders have also benefited from the regular support and challenge provided by the school improvement partner, particularly in developing the quality of teaching. The school is a member of the 'forward learning community', a partnership group including three other local schools, namely Saltaire Primary, Crossflatts Primary and Eldwick Primary School. School leaders have taken the opportunity to collaboratively develop aspects of leadership practice, for example in literacy, numeracy, the Early Years Foundation Stage and governance in liaison with these schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Angela Headon
Her Majesty's Inspector