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3 May 2013

Miss Julie Tomlinson
Headteacher
Sitlington Middlestown Junior and Infant School
Cross Road
Middlestown
Wakefield
West Yorkshire
WF4 4QE

Dear Miss Tomlinson

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Sitlington Middlestown Junior and Infant School, Wakefield

Following my visit to your school on 2 May 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 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, governors, a group of pupils, middle leaders and a representative of the local authority. The inspector observed the school's work and evaluated a range of documentation including: the tracking of pupils' progress; the school improvement plan; monitoring reports and records of lesson observations. In addition, senior leaders took the HMI on a tour of the school to look briefly at teaching and learning and the changes made since the inspection in March.

Context

Governors are preparing to appoint a new Chair of the Governing Body who has extensive knowledge and experience of school governance. Further governor vacancies are being filled. The teacher with responsibility for Year 6 has commenced a period of maternity leave. A temporary teacher with good first-hand knowledge of the pupils is covering this absence.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection, the school has done a great deal to lay the foundations for improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and in accelerating pupils' progress. Senior leaders have focused successfully on the aspects of teaching that require improvement and have raised awareness of what constitutes effective learning.

Systems to check on the quality of teaching are gathering pace with the increased focus on coaching and individual support for teachers. All teachers have clear performance targets linked to the new Teachers' Standards and to pupils' progress. Senior leaders report back regularly to staff on the quality of lessons and pupils' work with clear guidance to help bring about improvement.

Middle leaders are far more focused in their work. Their ability to influence colleagues is increasing their potential to impact more effectively on school improvement.

The school improvement plan provides a clear direction for the school and has a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching, raising standards and in strengthening the impact of leadership at all levels. However, some of the targets within the plan are not as sharp as they could be to fully inform staff and governors about how effectively the school is improving over-time.

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:

- sharpen measurable targets and milestones in the school improvement plan.

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

External support

The support from the local authority is very well tailored to the school's most pressing priorities. The impact of this work can be seen in the increasing confidence of senior staff, the strengthening of middle leadership and in the improvements to the quality of teaching and learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood

Her Majesty's Inspector