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07 May 2013

Mr Iain Owens
Headteacher
Bungay Primary School
Wingfield Street
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Suffolk
NR35 1HA

Dear Mr Owens

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Bungay Primary School, Suffolk local authority.

Following my visit to your school on 7 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 on 31 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body with three other governors, and the school's adviser from the local authority. The school improvement and development plan were evaluated along with monitoring information and pupils' books. There was a tour of the school and brief visits to classrooms.

Context

There have been no changes in staffing since the inspection, although roles and responsibilities have been reviewed, including a new special educational need coordinator.

Main findings

The right things are in place to move the school forward and to build upon the improvements to pupils' achievement identified in the January inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher present a united front and have their sights firmly fixed on speeding up the pace of change. They have made sure that there is nothing in the way of improving teaching. For example, providing sufficient resources and facilities, setting high expectations for pupils' behaviour and being clear about what is expected of staff.

Although the action plan focuses well on improving teaching and measuring how well teaching helps pupils to make good progress, it does not reflect the good work that is taking place. The plan is not complete, so does not yet provide enough detail to make sure that the actions are monitored rigorously. Nevertheless, this has not hampered effective action taking place so far, and staff and governors have been involved in the preparation of the plan, particularly at a recent training day.

Subject leadership has improved since the inspection and this means that there are more leaders who can share the load for checking and improving the quality teaching. This increased level of delegation not only empowers leaders to show what they can do and to be accountable for the results of their work, but also makes sure that the headteacher takes on a more strategic leadership role.

Senior leaders have added greater rigour to checking the quality of teaching, making sure that teachers are held to account for the accuracy of their assessment of each pupil's learning and the amount of progress made in lessons. A two-weekly programme for monitoring teaching makes sure that any weaknesses are identified and acted upon quickly. Information from lesson observations, the work in pupils' books and data on pupils' progress is carefully recorded and shared with staff. The detail allows questions to be asked and further investigation to take place, but the records do not make sufficient links between what was found out and the amount of difference that these things make to pupils' achievement.

By building on the improvements noted in the inspection report, pupils' understanding of letters and sounds has improved, as indicated in the school's data. Similarly, further improvement is evident in the quality of teachers' marking, which gives pupils more opportunities to reflect on what they have learned and how to do even better next time.

The governing body is not yet fully active in challenging leaders about the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Governors are clear about what their responsibilities are but not as confident about how to challenge leaders effectively. They have had recent training to look at data on pupils' achievement.

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 recommends that further action is taken to:

- complete the action plan so that it gives clear guidance for those monitoring the actions and for measuring the difference that the actions make to pupils' achievement
- make sure that when checking on the quality of teaching, links are made specifically to the difference that things are making to pupils' achievements
- undertake an external review of governance to strengthen governors' challenge to senior leaders.

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

External support

The school's local authority adviser knows the school well and support from the local authority enables senior staff to get help when they need it. For example, the school's adviser will work with the headteacher in revising the action plan. Staff are appreciative of the support, such as the training for governors. The headteacher has made links with a successful school in Plaistow, London to look at leadership and teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector