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16 May 2013

Mr Martin J Lister
Headteacher
Hawthorn Tree School
Toot Lane
Boston
PE21 0PT

Dear Mr Lister

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Hawthorn Tree School.

Following my visit to your school on 15 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 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the head and interim head of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the Chair of the Governing Body with four other governors, and an education adviser commissioned by the local authority. A telephone conversation was held with a deputy headteacher from another primary school who is providing external support for staff. The school improvement plan was evaluated. The findings of school and governor monitoring activities and the performance management of staff were discussed.

Context

There have been no significant contextual changes within the school since the section 5 inspection.

Main findings

The school has produced an action plan which makes clear its aims and priorities. The arrangements for monitoring and the timescales to work to are specific. Senior leaders and governors are exceptionally well focussed on all aspects of school improvement. The governing body has undertaken much additional training to equip them to understand school data and challenge senior leaders about the school's performance. They are keen to undertake further training to help them in fully understanding their monitoring role and how best to organise this.

Teaching is beginning to improve and develop in consistency. There has been a whole school drive on improving writing and teachers are more explicit in their feedback to pupils, making clear how they can improve their work and informing them of their next steps. Sound decisions have been made about how best to deploy staff and make effective use of space for learning. Systems for monitoring the progress of particular groups of pupils are developing. Staff and governors are aware of the necessity to monitor the work planned for pupils who receive additional support and to keep track of their progress. The school works hard to gain the support of these pupils' families, but has some way to go to build bridges with all. The performance of teaching and support staff is linked to school targets, but not specifically to individual cohorts, and is therefore not sufficiently impacting on raising 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 recommend that further action is taken to:

- link the objectives for assessing the performance of staff more closely to the needs of the cohort for which they have responsibility
- develop the school's work with pupils who require additional support and work with the parents of these pupils more closely to improve their achievement and progress
- analyse the impact of additional support on groups of pupils and develop the monitoring role of the governing body to specifically challenge the school on the performance of different groups
- schedule further visits to the school by HMI to monitor the progress of the school.

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

External support

The school has received good levels of support from the local authority on reviewing the progress of the school. It has assisted with improving the learning environment across the school. It has brokered support from another local school on developing pupils' writing, planning in mathematics and improving the quality of teaching. As a

result, the school has created a vibrant environment which enthuses pupils and stimulates learning. The quality and quantity of writing is improving, particularly from boys. The local authority has delivered high quality training for the governing body, which has improved their knowledge and helped them to begin to fulfil their role more effectively. The local authority is also working with the governing body and leaders to develop sustainable leadership and organisation models which adjust to rising numbers on roll and changing demographics in the school population.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Head of Service for Lincolnshire.

Yours sincerely

Jane Melbourne
Her Majesty's Inspector