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Mrs Karen Rolf
Headteacher
Danesholme Junior School
Motala Close, Corby
NN18 9DT

Dear Mrs Rolf

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Danesholme Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 16 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, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and three members of the governing body. Her Majesty's Inspector spoke with the local authority's School Improvement Manager by telephone. The school's post-Ofsted action plans and reports from monitoring activities were checked.

Context

The headteacher was appointed three days ago to replace the previous headteacher who left in March 2013. The new headteacher was formerly one of two assistant headteachers. The other assistant headteacher is now acting deputy headteacher.

Main findings

Since the inspection in January, the headteacher, staff and governing body have put in place clear and effective action plans to help guide school improvement. They have involved all staff in this by asking teachers to assess how they can best move

pupils' learning on in their lessons. This valuable opportunity to reflect on teaching and learning has enabled staff to identify more clearly the reasons why some pupils do less well than others. As a result, effective actions have already taken place to improve the teaching of mathematics and pupils' reasoning skills. Leaders and governors are rightly stepping up the intensity of monitoring and the scrutiny of pupils' learning and teachers' performance.

The school's plans for improvement are ambitious but do not specify who is monitoring or evaluating each priority or action. It is also important that leaders make sure that those responsible for evaluating pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics are good or outstanding teachers themselves and are experts in these areas. Governors have already set up monitoring routines and links with staff that will enable them to play a full part in supporting and challenging the school. Although staff undertake termly and robust reviews of pupils' progress these are not frequent enough to ensure that all pupils reach their targets.

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:

- make sure that action plans define who is monitoring and who is evaluating each priority for improvement, and that these checks are carried out by good or outstanding teachers of reading, writing and mathematics
- make sure that teachers and leaders check pupils' progress more frequently to help all pupils reach their learning targets.

HMI will contact the school in the Autumn term and check that the teaching is improving and that pupils are making enough progress, particularly in mathematics.

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

External support

The local authority has stepped up its scrutiny of this school having identified that its performance had previously declined and was causing concern. The school improvement manager has arranged for the new headteacher to be linked to another headteacher of a good school. This aims to support the headteacher and help other leaders and teachers see and share good practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Her Majesty's Inspector