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Mr Nigel Pratley
Headteacher
Kilburn Junior School
The Flat
Kilburn
Belper
DE56 0LA

Dear Mr Pratley

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Kilburn 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 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, subject leaders and members of the governing body. Prior to the monitoring inspection, a meeting by phone was held with the school advisor from the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed.

Context

There have been no changes since the inspection.

Main findings

Effective steps have been taken to improve marking. Teachers have benefited from guidance from school leaders and the local authority. Subject leaders have checked marking; records show that it is better than at the time of the inspection. Subject leaders have identified from this check the next steps that need taking to further improve marking. This demonstrates that leaders understand how to drive school improvement.

The school is now addressing the other aspects of teaching that need improving. Teachers have had training from the local authority on how to improve questioning. The impact of this is not yet apparent. Checks on lessons are also planned to identify specifically where they need to be more challenging.

Some of the success criteria in the school improvement plan are not measurable, so it is unclear how school leaders and governors will know that the steps they have taken to improve have had the desired impact. Some criteria are not challenging enough. For example, one success criterion is that pupils make the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics this year. For teaching and achievement to be judged good there needs to be a favourable proportion that exceed the expected progress. This is not mentioned in the priorities.

Subject leaders are making better use of assessment information with staff and the system for collecting and analysing pupil progress data is strengthening. They do not make sufficient use of national assessment information so that they can check how well pupils in school are progressing compared with the national averages.

The governors have begun a programme of visits so that they better understand the work of the school. They demonstrate that they are knowledgeable about where and why aspects of teaching need strengthening. They do not have a good enough understanding of how the school manages the performance of teachers and how this links to the priorities for school improvement. Governors have started to ask pertinent questions about the strategic development of the school. The next step is to develop more of a strategic influence on the priorities for improvement. For example, they are not involved at the earliest stages of preparation of the improvement plan where they could challenge the headteacher more effectively on the reasons for school priorities.

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:

- make some of the success criteria in the school improvement plan measurable and more challenging

- ensure that subject leaders become more familiar with national assessment information so that they are better able to compare pupils' progress in school to national expectations
- work with the local authority to arrange for the governors to link with another governing body with proven success in performance management and strategic planning so that they learn from good practice
- invite the headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body to attend an Ofsted 'Getting to good' seminar in June 2013
- arrange for HMI to return to the school during the autumn term 2013 to carry out lesson observations with school leaders, concentrating on the level of challenge and the quality of questioning
- arrange for HMI to join a governors meeting this term to offer practical advice on how governance can be strengthened
- make arrangements for the school to use the Ofsted mathematics training materials this year.

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

External support

The school has benefited from some useful support from the local authority. The school advisor has helped subject leaders to gain a better grasp on how to analyse assessment information and improve marking which is strengthening the impact of leadership. By doing joint lesson observations they have assisted the headteacher in identifying specific steps to improve teaching. They have facilitated visits to schools to share good practice and have helped governors to understand how they should be challenging and supporting the headteacher.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector