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17 May 2013

Liz Jackson
Little Thurrock Primary School
Rectory Road
Grays
RM17 5SW

Dear Mrs Jackson

Monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Little Thurrock Primary School, Thurrock local authority.

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 5 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and the deputy headteacher, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I evaluated the school's improvement plans. I conducted two lesson observations with the deputy headteacher. I scrutinized documents relating to pupil progress and the outcomes of monitoring activities. I fed back my findings to yourself, your deputy, a representative from the local authority and nine members of the governing body.

Context

There have been no changes to staff or the governing body since the Section 5 inspection.

Main findings

Leaders have adapted the school's improvement plans to address all of the areas of improvement from the inspection in March 2013. Attainment and progress targets are set for July 2013 only and not beyond. Some of the targets are challenging enough, including those for attainment in writing. It is difficult therefore for governors and others to monitor the school's progress in improving achievement overtime, so that it is good by the time of the next inspection.

Leaders are working with individual teachers to develop their practice through coaching and there has been some improvement in literacy and numeracy teaching. Some evaluations of the quality of teaching in subjects other than mathematics and English, by senior leaders, are too generous. Some weaknesses are missed and therefore feedback is not as helpful as it could be.

There has been a review of governance and members of the governing body have begun training to improve their effectiveness. The governing body has been restructured. Meetings are now timetabled so that they coincide with teachers' termly assessments. This enables governors to monitor pupils' progress more regularly and ask challenging questions in time for leaders to take further action. More needs to be done to ensure that all governors can challenge the school effectively. Governors are planning to request achievement data in a way that can be easily interpreted by all of them. Governors have not yet received the information they need to consider the pay structure of the staff and the quality of teaching. Nor do they have a grasp on the impact of pupil premium funding.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement. Following the visit to the school, I recommend that further action is taken to:

- review and extend the remit of the school's improvement plan to ensure it includes challenging targets and appropriate actions to improve achievement, including in writing, so that it is good by the time of the next inspection
- ensure that governors are supported by the local authority to monitor the school's progress robustly while they are trained to become more effective
- ensure that senior leaders receive the training they need to monitor teaching and learning in all subjects accurately

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

External support

The local authority has brokered support for leadership and management and to improve teaching, which is beginning to have an impact. They have arranged for a local leader in education to work with the school and support it through transition to new leadership when the current headteacher leaves in August 2013. However while the governing body is developing its own effectiveness, the local authority is not monitoring the school's progress carefully enough.

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

Yours sincerely

Michelle Winter
Her Majesty's Inspector