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Mrs Lizzie Girling
Headteacher
Causton Junior School
Maidstone Road
Felixstowe
IP11 9ED

Dear Mrs Girling

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Causton Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 17 June 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 1 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings to discuss the action taken since the last inspection were held with you and other senior leaders, subject coordinators, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan and the school's lesson observation records were evaluated. Brief visits were made to several classrooms to see pupils at work. The school provided its latest assessment summaries for each year group.

Context

You are headteacher of both Causton Junior School and Maidstone Infant School. The schools collaborate and share two other members of staff.

Main findings

The last inspection confirmed for the school leaders and governors that they had identified the priorities for improvement and that the action already being taken was correctly focused. Lesson observations and work scrutiny result in well-focused feedback for individual teachers as well as a whole-school overview that informs future improvement planning.

Regular analysis of each year-group's progress is well established, along with checks on the performance of different groups of pupils, including those eligible for free school meals. Senior leaders follow a programme of meetings to discuss each pupil's progress with their class teachers. Pupils who need additional support or challenge over the next few weeks are identified.

Progress over the year to date is good throughout Key Stage 2. The latest assessment data shows that pupils are currently making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups. Pupils in Year 6 are on course for better results than those achieved in 2012 because they have made better progress in reading and mathematics and similar progress in writing. However, pupils' progress since joining the school still requires improvement, particularly in writing, due to slower progress in previous years. This weakness is currently being addressed.

A strong feature of the school is the way that you have enabled all staff to be involved in strengthening pupils' progress. The senior and middle leaders are working in a concerted way to drive forward improvements. Through pupil progress meetings, teachers are encouraged to use their initiative to find ways of improving outcomes for their pupils. The special educational needs coordinator provides guidance to ensure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given appropriate support to fill gaps in their knowledge and to address their particular needs.

The school action plan is well structured and makes clear how the school will be improved to good. It is kept under constant review, and adapted as new issues arise. The action points are all appropriate and include the recommended areas for improvement from the last inspection as well as areas the school has identified for itself.

The governing body is active in its monitoring of the school, particularly through its scrutiny of pupil progress data and its role in exploring pupils' views. Individual governors visit the school regularly, but these visits are not formally scheduled. Governors are well aware of the importance of the pupil progress meetings, but have not observed any directly.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- strengthen the direct involvement of governors by identifying named governors to monitor each aspect of the school improvement plan and by formalising the programme of governor visits to the school, including opportunities to observe some pupil progress meetings
- set long-term targets for each year-group specifying the average attainment levels expected by the end of Year 6 for progress to be considered good and break these targets down to provide milestones for good progress each term
- identify further improvements in teaching by enrolling on one of the Better English and Mathematics conferences being run by Ofsted.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. The school has agreed to provide regular updates on pupils' progress.

External support

The local authority is monitoring the school closely through a strategic review group of local authority officers, senior leaders and governors. This plays an important role in supporting and validating the work of the leadership team. Local authority advisers are working closely with the mathematics and literacy subject leaders. The school has also commissioned an independent consultant to provide additional advice for the leadership team on using assessment to promote good learning.

Good liaison with Maidstone Infant School is having clear benefits for pupils. Teachers are working together to ensure they use teaching approaches that build on earlier learning and assess pupils in a consistent way. In addition to these close links, the school is extending its links with other schools, including two very successful schools in different local authorities. This is providing teachers with opportunities to learn from good practice elsewhere.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen Abbott
Her Majesty's Inspector