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18 June 2013

Jackie Smith and Rebecca Vowles
Headteacher and deputy headteacher
Heanor Langley Infant School
Laceyfields Road
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Dear Mrs Smith and Mrs Vowles

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Heanor Langley Infant 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 in April 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher who leads the school on Fridays, members of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority. The inspector toured the school and visited classrooms to see reading being taught. Marking in mathematics was also checked. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed.

Context

Since the inspection a Key Stage 1 teacher has been appointed.

Main findings

Since the inspection the school has taken some positive steps to improve teaching. Teachers have been to visit other schools to gain a better understanding of what constitutes good teaching and learning. Policies for reading, writing, mathematics and calculation have been reviewed so that it is quite clear what school leaders expect from teaching so that it is good. Teachers are responding positively to this. For example, in the daily reading lessons teachers are trying to ensure the greater engagement of pupils with the activities. Marking in English is stronger than mathematics. However, recent steps taken to strengthen marking are bearing fruit as teachers are starting to respond to pupils' mistakes with useful guidance.

The school action plan covers all the necessary priorities to get to good. School leaders are more successful at giving training and advice than they are at checking that this guidance is implemented swiftly. This means that the quality of teaching varies with some that is good and some that requires improvement. In this small school, leaders are quite clear that those that lead literacy and numeracy must also be good teachers. Plans are in place to ensure that this is the case and to strengthen the leadership of literacy and numeracy by coaching inexperienced leaders.

The governing body has made arrangements for the review of governance before the end of term. They have decided on an appropriate strategy for checking the work of the school more effectively, such as linking governors to aspects of the schools' work and then making regular visits to school. Governors have started to ask pertinent questions about the strategic development of the school. The next step is to develop a more strategic overview of the priorities for improvement.

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:

- check that the useful training, advice and guidance to improve teaching is being implemented straight away
- implement the plans that governors have in place for checking the work of the school straight away
- strengthen subject leadership in literacy and numeracy by using the senior leaders to demonstrate and model good practice.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

Following the inspection the local authority has acted quickly to link the school to others where practice is good or outstanding. The school is benefiting from training to improve mathematics and also to better understand what constitutes good teaching.

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