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Mr Bryan Harrison
Headteacher
Miriam Lord Community Primary School
Bavaria Place
Manningham
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD8 8RG

Dear Mr Harrison

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Miriam Lord Community Primary School, Bradford

Following my visit to your school on 21 June 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 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, other senior and middle leaders, the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan and scrutinised other documents, including the draft findings of a recent review by the local authority and data on pupils' current attainment and progress. I also toured the school with two, Year 5 pupils.

Context

Since the school's section 5 inspection, the governing body has been replaced with an IEB; this group met for the first time this week. One member of the senior leadership team will retire at the end of the summer term. A new assistant headteacher has been appointed and will take up their post in September.

Main findings

Your effective work and that of other senior and middle leaders and staff to improve the school has continued at a pace since the inspection. You have re-shaped the school's improvement plan to align it more closely with the findings of the inspection and are

ensuring that the actions you are taking are more closely targeted towards addressing the areas for improvement identified. The planned whole-school professional development sessions have also been adjusted to ensure training now focuses more sharply on improving aspects, such as, marking and written feedback. You and your team are continuing to use monitoring and evaluation effectively to check whether actions are bringing about the desired improvement and to pinpoint where further development work is necessary. The work that was already underway at the time of the inspection to improve pupils' progress in phonics is now having an impact. This has resulted in, for example, a dramatic increase in proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 increasing compared with 2012.

Similarly, the relentless focus by you and your team on improving teaching quality has resulted in a marked improvement in the proportion of good or better teaching. This was confirmed during the recent external review when compared with the findings of a similar review in February 2013. This stronger profile of teaching is reflected in school data which indicate that overall pupils' progress is improving in all subjects. However, you and your staff are aware that these data also show that not all groups of learners in all classes are making similarly accelerated progress. In addition, in a small minority of cases this is resulting in widening gaps in performance.

You have swiftly sought the views of parents about how they could be more actively involved in their child's learning. In response, you have already put in place a number of strategies, such as increasing the frequency with which children's progress is reported to parents and inviting parents into classrooms to find out more about approaches to the teaching of calculations in mathematics. However, you, other leaders and members of the IEB are acutely aware that more still needs to be done to ensure all parents and carers are more fully involved in their child's learning. Pupils that I spoke to during my tour of the school were typically keen to talk about their learning and showed an enthusiasm for their work.

Although the IEB has only recently been appointed they have quickly developed a secure understanding of the priorities and challenges the school faces. Between them, members have a very wide range of skills and expertise in relation to governance, the community the school serves and school improvement. As a result, they are well placed to provide robust challenge and effective support for you and other leaders, and to help shape the future strategic direction of the school. They are keen to develop first-hand their working knowledge of the school and are strongly committed to helping it to improve.

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

- monitor more closely the gaps in performance between different groups of pupils and take action to address any emerging differences
- ensure the tracking of pupils' attainment reviews progress in narrowing of the gap between current attainment and national averages as well as national expectations
- consider attending the Ofsted 'Better Mathematics' conference.

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

You and other leaders continue to work well with the local authority and partner schools in the locality. For example, recent paired observations involving your leaders and the headteacher of another local school or the local authority adviser were helpful in quality assuring the school's judgements. You are also making judicious use of external specialists to enhance internal skills and expertise in the drive to bring about rapid improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli

Her Majesty's Inspector