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Ms Bryony Baynes
Headteacher
Kempsey Primary School
Ellsdon
Kempsey
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Dear Ms Baynes

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kempsey Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 2 July 2013 with Deborah James HMI, 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 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, pupils, members of the governing body including the Chair and Vice Chair, and a representative of the local authority. The school's raising achievement plan and records of monitoring of teaching and learning were evaluated.

Context

Since the last inspection you have taken up your post full time as headteacher, replacing the interim executive headteacher in April 2013. A new senior leadership structure has been put in place to take effect from September 2013. Two assistant headteacher posts will be replaced by three senior leaders responsible for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs (SEN). The assistant headteachers will

remain as class teachers. The deputy headteacher post, which is remaining in the structure, will no longer have responsibility for literacy or SEN. The Chair and Vice Chair were elected just two weeks ago after the previous Chair resigned from the Governing Body. Three other governors have also stood down from the governing body. One new governor has been co-opted but other vacancies remain.

Main findings

You have tackled with determination significant issues within the leadership of the school that needed to be addressed urgently before the school could improve further. In a short space of time the senior leadership team has been restructured and appointments made for the Autumn Term to enlarge the senior leadership team and provide additional capacity.

You know the strengths and weaknesses in the school well and this is reflected in a detailed action plan with milestones to monitor and evaluate improvements. You have challenged weaknesses in teaching and arrangements have been put in place through new appointments to address this.

The introduction of pupil progress meetings has ensured a greater challenge and accountability of teachers and raised expectations about the quality of teaching and achievement of pupils. Systems for performance management have been enhanced to ensure that any mismatches between pay scale and quality of teaching are dealt with.

Pupils are highly articulate and also have strong views and high expectations about the school. They are pleased with the improvements in behaviour but feel that the curriculum is too narrow and that opportunities to study a wider range of subjects beyond literacy, numeracy and science are limited. They reported variability in the opportunity for practical activities and that in lessons in PE were too easy.

After a turbulent year within the governing body a smaller but highly knowledgeable governing body is now in place. Although it is too early to see the impact of the new appointments governors are highly focussed on bringing about rapid improvements. They share your vision and are highly supportive as well as challenging of the work of senior leaders. Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are especially skilled in analysing data and in the field of human resources.

Senior leaders and governors are taking 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 sure:

- all senior leaders are held to account for their areas of responsibility when the raising achievement plan is monitored and evaluated
- pupils receive their full entitlement of subjects within the curriculum and that subject leaders are effective in reviewing the impact of this

- all groups of pupils are stretched and challenged do as well as they can, including those with disabilities and/or special educational needs (SEN), those eligible for the Pupil Premium and those who find learning easy.

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

The local authority has offered extensive support to the school, particularly in facing the challenges within leadership. Regular meetings with you and through the work of a project board have offered both support and challenge in seeking to restructure leadership within the school. The local authority has supported you in monitoring and improving teaching. The review of the effectiveness of the governing body has led to significant changes in leadership during the year. The local authority has also offered support for mathematics and SEN to address issues of underachievement.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector