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Mrs C Adams
Headteacher
Burlington Junior School
Marton Road
Bridlington
East Riding of Yorkshire
YO16 7AQ

Dear Mrs Adams

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Burlington Junior School, Bridlington

Following my visit to your school on 23 September 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 July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the assistant headteacher, the literacy coordinator, the Chair of the Governing Body and a local authority representative. I met pupils, examined school documents, including the post Ofsted action plan, monitoring records of teaching and your latest progress data. I also saw teaching and learning in the 12 classes in the school.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, two teachers have been employed to cover staff maternity leave. The headteacher is absent due to illness and a class teacher has returned to work.

Main findings

The school accept its performance requires improvement to be good. The school's focus has been on ironing out inconsistencies in the impact of teaching on learning, ensuring staff have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils are capable of and making better use of the pupil assessment information to ensure that work is pitched at the right level for pupils. The school is also striving to be more rigorous, accurate and regular in initial assessment of pupils on entry to the school, target-setting, monitoring and evaluation of the progress pupils make as they move through the school.

Policies such as those for assessment, marking and feedback have been re-drafted. Leaders have also refined the approach to the curriculum in an effort to reinforce the development of pupils' literacy skills within subjects other than English through a series of themes. The inspector's brief visits to classrooms with the assistant headteacher highlighted a big gap between the least and most effective practice in the school in terms of teaching and support for pupils, although there were some signs that the agreed new procedures for developing pupils' writing skills and providing more evaluative feedback were being more widely adopted. However, the school's implementation of its action plan is in its infancy and has only been fully operational for a matter of weeks, so the new systems and expectations have yet to embed throughout the school. The school's leaders are under no illusions of the difficult task they face in improving the effectiveness of the school in a timely fashion.

Despite the various systems in place to monitor, challenge and evaluate the school's work, governors have not held the school sufficiently to account or exerted a sufficiently strong influence to ensure its effectiveness was better than mediocre. Governors recognise that they would benefit from new blood with educational expertise to support their challenge of the school's leaders and managers. A more recent focus on greater rigor and accountability is reflected in plans to ensure the headteacher's performance management is more robust, and that governors acquire a better grasp of pupil progress data to inform their questioning of leaders.

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:

- ensure an external review of governance is undertaken in a timely fashion
- link formally with a good or better school to accelerate further the school's improvement
- ensure judgements on the quality of teaching are linked to its impact on pupils' learning
- ensure senior leaders exert a greater strategic influence on the management of teaching and learning and in holding staff more robustly to account for the quality of their work.

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

As well as providing a range of support to the school such as training, the local authority are also checking the impact of the changes being made to ensure the issues from the previous inspection are being demonstrably tackled. The local authority is also taking steps to corroborate school leaders' views that the actions taken do have the intended impact on improving provision and outcomes.

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

Yours sincerely

John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector