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27 September 2013

Louise Regan
Hillocks Primary and Nursery School
Unwin Road
NG17 4ND

Dear Ms Regan

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hillocks Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 26 September 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 10 July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

- provide more feedback to the staff more quickly on how well the changes to teaching and learning are being implemented
- implement the changes to the governing body's structures and provide training, so that governors are able understand and use information about the pupils' achievement
- attend one of the Ofsted 'Getting to good' seminars.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and another senior leader, the Chair and representatives of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Also, I toured the school visiting classrooms briefly, accompanied by a group of pupils, with whom I discussed changes at the school.

Context

One new teacher and some teaching assistants have joined the staff this term.

Main findings

You began work straight after the inspection to make improvements in the quality of teaching and identified some changes that could be made swiftly. As a result, even though there was only one week between the end of the inspection and the start of the summer holidays, you have been able to start immediately this term improving the pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work. The pupils confirmed to me that the teachers are putting more emphasis on handwriting and presentation. They thought that their handwriting was better already, as a result.

A formal action plan has been drafted, which covers all of the areas for improvement from the inspection. Most of the work is at an early stage of development, but the pupils were able to tell me about the broader range of opportunities they are now getting to improve their writing. It was clear that less progress has been made in providing more opportunities for them to practice their numeracy. I discussed with you some of the ways in which your plans could be improved, in order to speed up the improvements. In particular, there was not enough emphasis on ensuring the staff get information quickly about how well they are making changes to their teaching.

The governing body has planned changes to its ways of working, in order to focus more on the achievement of the pupils. It has also tried to arrange for training on how to use information about the pupils' achievement. Neither of these developments has taken place as yet and so there is little evidence at this point of any increased impact from the work of the governing body.

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 reduced the level of support it provides to the school, which is appropriate now that the school no longer requires significant improvement. It is, quite rightly, continuing to monitor the progress of the school and to provide some adviser support; I asked the local authority to work quickly with the school to plan how the support will be used and how that support might be used with the governing body as well as the school.

The school has identified other sources of support for itself. The sources include links with other, successful schools and also training schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector