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25 September 2013

Mr R Dodd
Headteacher
Paddock Junior Infant and Nursery School
Heaton Road
Paddock
Huddersfield
West Yorkshire
HD1 4JJ

Dear Mr Dodd

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Paddock Junior Infant and Nursery School, Kirklees

Following my visit to your school on 24 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 June 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.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders, pupils, the Governing Body and a representative of the Local Authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We visited lessons and I looked at the school action plan with you.

Context

The school has admitted sixty pupils into the Reception class. This means this cohort is heavily over-subscribed. The local authority has provided additional funding for staff and resources. Three teachers have left. Governors have appointed two new

staff, one of whom is a newly qualified teacher. Another member of staff has returned from maternity leave and some staff have moved age groups. The school has extended classrooms in lower Key Stage 2 and refurbished the Reception class.

Main findings

Leaders lost no time in taking action between the inspection and the publication of the report. They used the information gathered during the inspection and final feedback to produce an initial plan. This focused them immediately on the key areas for improvement. All staff are clear about what needs to be done and how improvements will be brought about, because they have been given ownership of the precise action plan. They know that they are accountable. There is a genuine commitment amongst all leaders and staff to get the school to good sooner than later. Staff describe the school as being 'revitalised'.

Senior leaders have taken a number of strategic decisions to support improvements. This has included moving staff to other year groups to better use their strengths and expertise. Newly built and refurbished learning environments are now enabling teachers to use space more creatively and effectively to develop pupils' independence and language skills. The introduction of whole school, and targeted strategies, is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. For instance, pupils enthuse about a new strategy to develop their speaking, listening and thinking skills. They say they have to 'communicate in groups to generate tasks and organise work' and then have to 'evaluate it'. Pupils' books show that teachers are using the new marking and feedback policy more consistently and effectively across school. Pupils say it is helping them to improve, because they have time to read the comments, reflect on their work and correct it. They say 'working walls' are helping them with their learning and to make their writing better.

The transition from nursery to the Reception class is improving because the good practice seen in the nursery is now evident in the Reception class. For instance, staff have planned and designed the areas of learning to meet the needs of individuals and groups of learners, including the most able. There is a clear focus on improving the children's ability to read, write and count. Even at this early point in the year, children are more confident and independent in their learning than previously.

Middle leaders say they have been 'empowered' because they are receiving appropriate training and support. They have been fully involved in developing the action plan and they meet weekly with senior leaders to monitor progress, measure the impact of actions and discuss next steps. This is moving things along at a faster rate than ever before. A useful summary document tracks the journey and the impact to-date.

Governors have taken immediate action to improve their work and challenge leaders on the quality of information provided. They have assigned a governor to monitor the progress of each area of the post-Ofsted action plan. They are clear about what they need to do to check on this. The governing body review is due to take place in

October. They know that there is still a need for all governors to be involved in leading and managing the school.

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 brokered the support of another headteacher to work with the school. Because of this support, senior leaders have developed and implemented systems and procedures that will help drive forward the improvements needed, particularly in the areas of data analysis, performance management and reporting to governors. Middle leaders are working with local authority consultants in English, maths and the Early Years Foundation Stage. They say this has improved their knowledge and skills and given them the confidence to be effective leaders. As a result, they are now very clear about what they need to do and how to support staff to improve their teaching.

The headteacher and a governor attended an Ofsted 'Getting to Good Seminar' in July. They say this has helped them to better understand what is needed to get the school to good. They will be attending a regional seminar in October on 'Early Childhood Progress'.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Bowyer

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Mrs Helen Storey- Senior Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools