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25 September 2013

Mrs Sue Fitt
Headteacher
Lancaster Ridge Primary School
Keswick Road
Lancaster
Lancashire
LA1 3LE

Dear Mrs Fitt

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lancaster Ridge Primary School, Lancashire

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 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. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

My judgement is 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:

- Enhance the impact leaders have and make sure new systems have real bite.
- Make visits made to other school have a real impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, pupils, some members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement and action plans were evaluated and a variety of children's work in books and on display examined. A learning walk was undertaken with you and meetings held with teachers who had undertaken some of the incisive actions to discuss their implementation and outcomes to date.

Context

Since the inspection the school has appointed an Associate Deputy Headteacher for one term and a newly qualified teacher. Teaching assistant numbers have been reduced. A staffing restructure allows teachers more time to provide pupils with support and take part in staff development.

Main findings

The Governing Body and senior leaders accepted the outcomes of the recent inspection and have taken immediate and incisive actions to secure improvement in the school.

Teachers now teach alongside each other to share expertise and support less experienced members of staff.

The reception class has been moved from the neighbouring children's centre to the main school building, this has had immediate effect on communications between the year 1 teacher and the Reception teacher, who can now more easily share information and advice on pupil's learning.

The new marking policy used by teachers now ensures give clear information is given to pupils on how to improve. Additionally, pupils I spoke to confirmed that the new 'fix it' time build into lessons helps to them improve their understanding by allowing them to act upon feedback.

New writing groups established before the end of the summer term help specific children. One group of boys in particular used a computer game to increase engagement in writing. I saw some clear examples of progress being made by them across the space of a few days.

Attendance at Ofsted's recent English conference helped the development of an overarching 'oracy' development plan, which maps out how spoken language will be improved in all curriculum subjects.

Staff attended the Ofsted maths conference and also found this a useful event. They will attend a Getting to Good seminar shortly.

Teachers have been given opportunities to see good practice by visiting other schools which has resulted in new systems being introduced, for example; 'next step pockets' in the early years. Senior leaders and governors must now carefully monitor these new systems and evaluate their impact.

Teachers had their performance management objectives reviewed immediately following the inspection and new objectives set that are focused on challenging them to improve the quality of their teaching.

The governing body's challenge to the school has improved. The school effectiveness committee has sharpened its focus on the use of progress data and hold senior leaders to account.

Plans have clear objectives but do not have explicit milestones that show what impact is expected for each action throughout the year. Senior leaders, middle leaders and governors must identify and then use these milestones to make sure they remain on track to reach their goals.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

I will evaluate the Governing Body's School Effectiveness Committee's impact and help leaders support their work.

External support

The Local Authority has been proactive in support the school both before and after the Section 5 inspection and is clear about what needs to be done in school. The school draws well on this support and has regular contact from both a school advisor and a Local Authority Monitoring and Intervention Team advisor to both coach and challenge the school to improve.

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

Yours sincerely

John Nixon

Her Majesty's Inspector

- Director of Children's Services for Lancashire
- Chair of the Governing Body