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26 September 2013

Mrs H Murray
Headteacher
Thornton Cleveleys Royles Brook Primary School
Marsh Road
Thornton-Cleveleys
Lancashire
FY5 2TY

Dear Mrs Murray

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Thornton Cleveleys Royles Brook Primary School, Lancashire

Following my visit to your school on 25 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 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. The school should take further action to:

- Further refine the improvement plan to identify key milestones so that the governing body and leaders can use them to check the impact of actions.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, representatives 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, a guided tour of the school was undertaken and a selection of mathematics books, planning, minutes of meetings and monitoring information was scrutinised.

Context

On September 1st 2013 a new headteacher took up appointment at the school.

Main findings

The new headteacher 'hit the ground running' and quickly developed a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Better observations of teaching and scrutiny of lesson plans have helped to identify where improvements are needed. Appropriate priorities are identified but the plan does not have milestones to measure impact.

The governing body took immediate action following the inspection and established an 'effectiveness committee' to monitor progress and hold senior leaders to account. Governors agreed to appoint additional teaching staff to enhance the provision for older pupils, allowing them to be taught in ability matched groups. Governors are more robustly holding leaders to account for the quality of teaching. Senior leaders must present objective judgements based on evidence to show the impact of improvements rather than use anecdotal opinions. The headteacher has identified that further work is necessary to develop senior leaders abilities to make judgements based upon evidence and linked these to targets and plans.

Teachers in Years 3, 4 and 5 attended training courses to improve the teaching of mathematics This resulted in amendments to the curriculum and better development of pupils' ability to calculate and use numbers.

Observation records show improvements in the quality of teaching and in particular the reduction of unnecessary teacher talk. New lesson plans ensure that work is more closely matched to pupils' needs.

The presentation of work in books and on display is improving because of the high expectations set by the headteacher. Marking is improving and more pupils are responding to feedback in their books.

The headteacher has quickly secured support from other schools that can demonstrate good or better practice. Links with a local secondary school are being extended to enhance the teaching of mathematics for more able pupils in Year 4 and 5. A link with a local outstanding primary school focussed on developing standards of mathematics in Key Stage One and subject leadership for middle leaders has also been established.

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 school is well supported by the local authority who continue to monitor the school regularly and make support available as necessary. The advisor has visited three times since the inspection to ensure smooth transition for the new headteacher.

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

The letter should be copied to the following:

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