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27 September 2013

Mr A Taylor
Kettlewell Primary School
Kettlewell
Skipton
North Yorkshire
BD23 5HX

Dear Mr Taylor

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kettlewell Primary School, Skipton

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 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.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the associate headteacher, two members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I spoke to staff and pupils and examined school documents, such as the post Ofsted action plan. I discussed the new policies and procedures being introduced and considered your latest pupil progress data. I also observed the teaching and learning of pupils throughout the school.

Context

Since the recent section 5 inspection, the headteacher has retired and a new headteacher and an associate headteacher have been appointed. A teacher has been employed to cover the long term absence of the Key Stage 1 teacher. The school has also entered into a formal partnership with Upper Wharfedale Secondary School.

Main findings

Despite some initial surprise and discontent, which stalled the improvement progress a little, the school has responded constructively to the requires improvement judgement. A momentum has been instigated and driven by the school's new leaders which is sharply focused on securing the necessary improvements as soon as possible. To this end, leaders are implementing a series of key strategic actions throughout the school, which are already

showing some early signs of success. A key development is a shift in culture and thinking so that staff are now beginning to focus on exactly how much progress pupils are making as they move through the school, rather than just their level of attainment. Staff are also starting to think in terms of the impact and outcomes of their teaching on pupils' learning, rather than the process of teaching, and assuming, it will have the desired effect.

The school has been a hive of activity in the few weeks since the start of the autumn term with many new initiatives introduced and a range of training and development opportunities arranged for staff. For example, this has involved: staff seeing and agreeing what high quality teaching and learning and excellent marking, feedback and assessment, looks like and how it can be delivered consistently; and accurate base line assessments of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. All of these initiatives and the introduction of several policies and systems have made staff fully aware of the heightened expectations incumbent on them, including a number of non-negotiable teaching and learning, assessment and tracking procedures.

The school's new leaders are pragmatic and know that they must eradicate the inconsistencies that exist and ensure the schoolwork becomes more effective and efficient. To this end they are more regularly and more rigorously monitoring and evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and assessing the relative success of the changes they are making. During this inspection visit, improvements were noted in the quality of marking and feedback to pupils and the match of work to pupils' particular needs, interests and abilities.

The governing body acknowledge that they must be more robust and rigorous going forward in their scrutiny and challenge of the school's leaders. This is in order to ensure that they are more certain that the reports, evaluations and testimony they receive reflects the reality of the school's performance and effectiveness. Steps are being taken to effect this with a sharper focus on evaluating the information they receive, supplementing this with first-hand evidence and being more discerning in calling staff to account for their work.

Senior leaders and governors are taking some effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure actions plans have monitoring and evaluation procedures built-in and that those responsible for taking actions are not always assessing the impact of the actions taken.
- ensure all governors are up to speed with the latest requirements of their roles, and are equipped to offer the necessary strategic challenge to the school's leaders.

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 is providing targeted support to accelerate the school's improvement. This has centred on helping to address, through training and guidance, the shortcomings identified by the previous inspection concerning pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and assessment, and monitoring and evaluation practices. The local authority has brokered further support from Markington School, an outstanding school at its own Ofsted inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Corporate Director of the children and young people's service for North Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector