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7 October 2013

Mr Mark Ashton
Headteacher
Warwick Bridge Primary School
Warwick Bridge
Carlisle
Cumbria
CA4 8RE

Dear Mr Ashton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Warwick Bridge Primary School, Cumbria

Following my visit to your school on 4 October 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 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:

- tighten the action plan to evaluate the impact of the actions on pupils' progress.

Evidence

I met with you, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. You and I visited each of the classrooms to meet staff and pupils and you pointed out changes that had been made since the beginning of term.

Context

You have been in post since September and two new teachers have been appointed. There have also been changes in the governing body and a new Chair started in September.

Main findings

You, your staff and the governing body are determined to ensure the school is good. The development plan has been written but priorities need to be stated more clearly and the progress and impact reported to governors on a more frequent basis to keep up momentum.

You started the term with a focus on teaching and learning and you have completed lesson observations, some done jointly with a local authority advisor: as a result you are gaining a more accurate picture of the quality of teaching. Resources have been improved, for example each class now has a 'visualizer' so that good work can be shared more easily and discussed. A 'global information technology system' allows staff to share resources and monitor lesson plans and allows pupils to be responsible for their own work areas. You also held a home and school meeting at the start of the term to outline your vision for the school, your response to the Ofsted inspection and to involve parents in the school's development. You received positive feedback from parents at the end of the meeting. The inspection report judged that: 'A significant minority of pupils in almost all year groups do not make as much progress as they should, especially the more-able.' Provisional results of assessment tests this year indicate a decline in the percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels in reading and writing. You are working hard on your 'eight secrets of success' to improve the progress of more able pupils.

On the day of my visit all Year 6 pupils were challenged to present a play in a day, this improved their speaking and listening skills and increased their confidence. A science training day for all your staff and staff from other schools raised awareness of problem solving activities and making learning more interesting and challenging. This event also gave staff the opportunity to forge good working relationships with teachers in other schools. Lots of other training has been undertaken, however, its impact has yet to be analysed or evaluated.

Behaviour boards and a merit system have been introduced which enable pupils to track their own behaviour progress. In addition, as part of your drive to improve behaviour you held a thinking morning which involved pupils and all staff, including lunchtime supervisors, who worked in mixed age teams to present their ideas to the school on how to have an enjoyable lunchtime. However, the changes suggested have yet to be put in place.

The governing body has undergone changes and a visit from a National Leader of Governance has been arranged to ensure that the governing body has the knowledge and expertise to challenge the school to help it improve. The governing body have looked at any shortage of skills they have and as a result appointed a new governor with skills in finance.

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 continues to make good use of the support offered by the local authority. You value the support with the school evaluation documents and the work that is being undertaken with the governing body regarding understanding of school data and the importance that all groups of pupils reach their full potential. The links you have forged with other schools have increased the opportunities for professional development for your staff and enrichment opportunities for your pupils: for example, the support with music has improved opportunities for your pupils.

You and a representative of the governing body plan to attend the Ofsted getting to good seminar in November.

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

Yours sincerely

Christina McIntosh

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority - including where the school is an academy