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6 December 2013

Jim Balmbra
Headteacher
Meadowside Primary School
Park Road
Burton Latimer
NN15 5QY

Dear Mr Balmbra

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Meadowside Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 December 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 October 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:

- secure mainly good or better teaching by sharing best practice and checking pupils' progress and performance more often
- make sure that teachers are trained to use assessment data better to help them gauge how much progress pupils are making, particularly the most able.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the interim headteacher, deputy headteachers and mathematics subject leaders. One of the deputy headteachers is temporarily covering for the substantive deputy who is on family leave. Her Majesty's Inspector also met with the Chair of the Governing Body and the local authority's senior school improvement manager to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated along with reviews of

progress undertaken by Northamptonshire local authority and governors' committees. After visiting most classes, assessments of pupils' progress, improvement targets and leaders' expectations were discussed and evaluated with the senior leadership team.

Main findings

Staffing is more stable after a period of disruption caused by high staff turnover. Leadership is also more secure and has been reinforced by the recent appointment of the interim headteacher to the substantive post from January 2014. In addition, the seven staff that joined in September have settled into their teaching roles, and the governing body has appointed staff to lead each key stage.

Improvement plans set out the right priorities to help leaders and governors monitor the school's actions. Leaders are checking that the support provided for teachers is having an impact on improving their teaching. There is a positive climate for learning in all classes. The leadership team uses a good range of assessment data to track how well pupils are doing. National assessments confirm that standards are improving but some more-able pupils should be doing better in writing and mathematics. This is especially the case where teaching requires improvement or because pupils' work is not being checked often enough. Although leaders and staff undertake termly reviews of pupils' progress, some pupils, and particularly the most able, fall short of their expected targets. Teachers use information or data about pupils' performance to plan the right support or intervention programmes for pupils, although this is not always the case where the teaching requires improvement. Leaders are helping teachers to see good practice and this needs to continue to establish more sustained and consistently good teaching so that all pupils achieve as well as they should.

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

Northamptonshire's senior school improvement manager has been proactive in securing effective interim leadership for the school. Links with a good local primary school were also fostered and developed with the support of the local authority, and is helping teachers and leaders to see and share good practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Her Majesty's Inspector