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13 December 2013

Mr Lee Shilton
Acting Headteacher
Priory Junior School
Priory Road
Gedling
NG4 3LE

Dear Mr Shilton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Priory Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 13 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:

- sharpen up some of the activities and targets in the school improvement plan so that it is clear to those monitoring the development that outcomes for pupils are strengthening where they most need to.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and a National Leader of Education (NLE) who is working with the school to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Assessment information, marking and the school's records of teachers' performance were scrutinised. I briefly visited all the classes in the school where teaching was taking place to observe the teaching and learning.

Context

The acting headteacher remains responsible for the school while the headteacher is away. One teacher will be leaving the school at the end of this year. The school is currently recruiting a replacement for this teacher.

Main findings

The school action plan covers all the necessary areas that need improving to get to good. Leaders and teachers have already strengthened the level of challenge in lessons and improved the quality of marking. There is a growing proportion of good teaching. One reason for this is that the acting headteacher is carrying out regular and effective checks on pupils' work, their progress and teaching. Staff are benefiting from training that is becoming better tailored to strengthen their teaching. Some of the targets and actions in the plan are not as precise as they need to be so that the leaders and governors will know when they have achieved success.

Governors have embarked on training to strengthen their knowledge and regular visits by some of them mean that they know the school well. They are becoming increasingly effective at questioning school leaders and have volunteered to have an external review of governance so that they can be better custodians of the school.

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 has helped the school by brokering the support of a NLE and checking the improvements being made by the school. The NLE has been particularly helpful in strengthening the leadership skills of the acting headteacher who is proving to be increasingly effective.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector