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26 March 2014

Mrs Helen Tarokh
Headteacher
Knighton Fields Primary School and Community Centre
Knighton Fields Road West
Leicester
LE2 6LG

Dear Mrs Tarokh

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Knighton Fields Primary School and Community Centre

Following my visit to your school on 25 March 2014 with Philippa Darley, Her Majesty's Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 January 2014. 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:

- conduct an external review of governance, to include a specific focus on how governors can strengthen their effectiveness in evaluating the impact of actions taken by school leaders to bring about school improvement
- ensure that there are clear, measurable success criteria in the action plan, so that school leaders and governors know the targets that need to be reached in order for the school to improve rapidly.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the assistant headteacher, and three other school leaders. I also met with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. These meetings were held in order to discuss

the actions taken since the last inspection. I visited the majority of classrooms and met with a group of pupils. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's post-Ofsted action plan, governing body minutes, pupils' work and your records for monitoring the quality of teaching.

Context

Since the last section 5 inspection, one assistant headteacher has left; a new one has been appointed and will join the school after Easter. A teacher has also been recruited on a temporary appointment to teach in Year 2.

Main findings

You have high expectations and are ambitious to move the school forward rapidly. Following the recent inspection, a termly post-Ofsted action plan was drawn up. It takes good account of the areas for improvement, appropriate milestones are indicated and monitoring and evaluation responsibilities are clear. However, this improvement plan lacks clear, measurable success criteria against which school leaders and governors can evaluate the achievement of all groups of pupils.

Teachers' and teaching assistants' professional development has rightly concentrated on some of the identified areas for improvement from the inspection. Leaders have raised the profile of reading and are making better use of the assessment of children's reading levels to help them access suitable books. The introduction of home learning logs has resulted in a marked improvement in the numbers of pupils completing homework. During this inspection there was evidence that professional development is influencing practice in the classroom. For example, reading records demonstrate that teaching assistants are using assessment criteria purposefully when listening to pupils read. However it is too early to evaluate the impact on improving outcomes for pupils.

Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching. However, records indicate that feedback is not sufficiently focused on aspects for improvement from the inspection. It does not always build upon previously identified weaknesses. In order to improve attitudes to learning, leaders have developed their own definition of what this constitutes and have identified that they need to develop more confident, resilient learners who are keen to attend school. Improvements in attendance have been sustained. However, leaders and governors are aware that attitudes to learning are still very much dependent on the quality of teaching, and this remains variable. All leaders share a renewed sense of urgency and understand how crucial it is for the school to address this quickly. However, the capacity of leaders to improve teaching rapidly, remains limited because of the limited capacity of the current leadership team.

Governors are determined to drive forward school improvement and have attended appropriate training. They are proactive, visit the school regularly and are increasingly asking leaders more challenging questions. However, partly due to a

lack of clarity about appropriate success criteria, their ability to evaluate independently the effectiveness of actions taken is limited.

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 adviser knows the school well and recognises its vulnerability in relation to securing good teaching. As a result, it has been identified as a priority school. In light of this, the adviser has helped leaders to provide effective challenge to improve teaching and support pupil progress meetings. The headteacher values the partnership with a local partner primary school and this is providing her and other leaders with the opportunity to observe good practice and develop their skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Julia Wright
Her Majesty's Inspector