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Mr Stephen Foot and Ms Jane Dunworth
Co-Headteachers
Minet Junior School
Avondale Drive
Hayes
Middlesex
UB3 3NR

Dear Mr Foot and Ms Dunworth

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Minet Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 20 May 2014, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- urgently increase the effectiveness of the Governing Body.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also met with seven teachers who have additional leadership responsibilities to talk about their work. I evaluated the school's improvement plans. I scrutinised minutes of governing body meetings, reports from a Local Leader of Education, information about pupils' achievement and your records

of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. I visited all of the classrooms where I looked at pupils' English and mathematics books.

Context

Since my last visit, Mr Foot has resigned due to his retirement plans, and will be leaving the school at the end of this academic year. The Governing Body has appointed Ms Dunworth to the post of headteacher from the autumn term. You are in the process of recruiting six senior leaders and class teachers to enable you to establish a new leadership structure and to replace teachers who are leaving the school at the end of the term. A teacher from Year 3 has left the school and a temporary teacher now teaches the class. You have appointed a teaching assistant to work throughout the school. There are still a number of unfilled vacancies on the Governing Body.

Main findings

The good rate of improvement that I found when I last visited the school has not continued and, in many regards, has plateaued. This school is now at serious risk of not being good by the time of the next inspection. The quality of teaching and learning remains inconsistent. Although there is no longer any inadequate teaching, there is still too much teaching that requires improvement.

Pupils' work is marked effectively in only a small proportion of the classes. Where it is good, pupils get valuable feedback, to which they respond well. They do not go on to repeat the same errors. Elsewhere, work is unmarked and pupils do not know how well they are doing. In some classes pupils' have four different English books. The quality of marking in each book differs and demonstrates a varying degree of expectation from the teacher.

Classroom displays celebrate the recent success in improving pupils' reading habits and writing skills. Pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning and each other. Additional adults, supporting pupils in classes, are not always well deployed. Too frequently, they are unclear about what is expected of them and what their role is in pupils' learning. This lack of clarity hinders pupils' progress rather than aiding it.

Your most recent assessments of pupils' work show that there is variation in the progress made by different year groups and between subjects. Your data shows that the achievement of the current Year 6 could be much lower in mathematics this year than it was in the previous year. Teaching of pupils in set ability classes for mathematics is ineffective. This is because teaching does not plan for the different needs of pupils within the ability bands.

The school development plan has been refined. However, it places too great an emphasis on improving the quality of teaching by sending teachers out of school on courses that are not effectively developing teachers' practice. School leaders are not using a range of monitoring evidence to rigorously evaluate their plans. Although the quality of teaching and learning is scrutinised, it is neither frequent nor rigorous enough to identify and improve the weakest practice.

Teachers with leadership responsibilities have attended training, which they say is helping them gain a better understanding of their role. They are aware of inconsistent teaching and learning in the areas for which they have responsibility but are not yet holding their colleagues robustly to account for improvements.

The Governing Body is not holding school leaders to account thoroughly enough. Although a governor now visits the school to look at the quality of teaching, minutes from the most recent meeting show that there was almost no discussion about how well children are achieving or the quality of teaching. Governors do not use the improvement plan to check whether leaders are achieving the improvements that they set out to do. Meetings are not well attended by members, and there are a number of vacancies that remain unfilled. At its most recent meeting, the number of school employees who are governors or clerks outnumbered other governors, severely limiting the Governing Body's ability to hold leaders to account. The local authority officer with responsibility for governor services is trying to strengthen the Governing Body with additional members. There has been some resistance to this, which needs addressing urgently. The Governing Body is not fulfilling its responsibilities adequately.

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 knows your school well and is holding leaders to account for improvements. Significant funds have been secured to enable a Local Leader of Education and a Specialist Leader of Education to work alongside you, to address improvements in reading and writing and to strengthen leadership. This support is not being adequately directed, to ensure the maximum benefit and currently, the school is getting poor value for money. The local authority has not used any of its powers of intervention to bring about a faster rate of improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Adam Higgins
Her Majesty's Inspector