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Mrs Barbara Robson
Headteacher
Kirkheaton Primary School
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Dear Mrs Robson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kirkheaton Primary School, Kirklees

Following my visit to your school on 11 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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 February 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:

- sharpen measurable targets in the school improvement plan
- agree key principles of effective practice in teaching and learning.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, a group of pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority. The inspector evaluated a range of documentation including: the school improvement plan; the tracking of pupils' progress; monitoring reports and records of lesson observations. In addition, senior leaders took HMI on a tour of the school to look briefly at teaching and learning and the changes made to provision since the inspection.

Context

Since the inspection in February one new member of staff has been appointed. Three teachers will leave the school at the end of the summer term.

Main findings

Although not expecting the outcomes of the inspection in February, senior leaders and governors have responded with renewed vigour to tackle the school's shortcomings. As a group, they accept that the priorities for improvement are the right ones for the school and have made suitable plans to tighten procedures and strengthen provision. The pace of change has accelerated, everyone is stepping up to the mark and the collective responsibility for improving the school has grown.

The school improvement plan follows closely the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The plan includes appropriate actions and intentions. However, some of the targets within the plan are not as sharp as they could be and are imprecise. This makes it difficult for governors to pinpoint with accuracy how well the school is improving over-time.

Procedures to check more rigorously on the quality of teaching and reviewing the progress pupils make have been tightened with improved systems in place for lesson observations, scrutinising pupils' work and analysing data. As a result, there is clear evidence to suggest that some pupils are catching up and making better progress than previously, particularly in mathematics and writing, although the progress of pupils across each year group is still too variable.

Teachers are increasingly aware of the aspects of their work that require improvement and have successfully focused their attention on improving pupils' attitudes to learning in class. This has resulted in significantly more pupils on task and engaged in their work. Senior leaders are correct in recognising that the next challenge is for teachers to agree some key principles of effective practice in teaching and learning to share.

Governance has become sharper-edged following the external review. Their actions are now demonstrating a clear understanding of the school's most pressing priorities and a resolve to challenge senior leaders and hold them to account.

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 is providing an effective level of support to the school. The range and quality of support provided is helping to improve the quality of teaching and strengthen the skills of leaders. Plans by the authority to develop links with other schools to increase teachers' awareness of effective practice in similar contexts are in place and will happen shortly.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood

Her Majesty's Inspector