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Mr Bryan Harrison
Headteacher
Miriam Lord Community Primary School
Bavaria Place
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Bradford
West Yorkshire
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Dear Mr Harrison

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Miriam Lord Community Primary School, Bradford

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

Senior leaders and the interim executive board are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, the IEB members and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. A number of documents were scrutinised including the summary of the school's self-evaluation, the outcomes of recent externally-conducted monitoring activity and evidence in relation to the Engaging Families Award.

Context

A new assistant headteacher joined the school in September 2013. There is a long-term supply teacher covering a Year 4 class until the end of the summer term. One permanent teacher with a subject leadership responsibility will leave the school at the end of the summer term to take up a deputy headteacher post in another school. Three newly qualified teachers have been appointed and will join the school in September 2014.

Main findings

You, your leadership team and the IEB have focused resolutely on the improving the quality of teaching, raising attainment, developing the curriculum and developing the partnership between the school, parents and carers and the local community. School data indicate that standards are set to rise at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 2014. The gap between the attainment of pupils in the school and the national average for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of KS2 is continuing to narrow rapidly. The close monitoring of the performance of different groups of pupils has led to more tailored support for those at risk of underachievement. The quality of teaching has continued to improve in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Your recent monitoring provides clear evidence that the quality and quantity of pupils' work in books, including their presentation, has improved markedly over the academic year. Strengths in approaches to teaching and learning within the school which have been identified by external partners are being increasingly shared to promote improvement in other schools in the local authority and beyond.

Attendance has a high priority in school and a tough stance is taken on long-term pupil absence. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has been successfully reduced but extended leave of absence remains a concern.

There have been very wide ranging improvements to the learning environment in many parts of the school to support teaching and learning and the delivery of the curriculum. For example, media and information and communication technology (ICT) resources such as those found in the 'hub' are helping to extend pupils' learning experiences and develop their ICT and communication skills. Further developments for upper Key Stage 2 and the Early Years Foundation Stage are planned for over the summer.

The IEB have a very clear view of the school's progress since the last inspection. Meetings focus sharply on monitoring improvement priorities and shaping the strategic direction of the school. Plans are well underway to establish a shadow governing body in the autumn term as part of the IEB's exit strategy. The IEB is working closely with the local authority governor service to facilitate a smooth transition and interested parents and staff have already been encouraged to find out more about the demands and expectations of the role of governor through training and information sessions.

The IEB has been proactive in seeking and responding to the views of parents and carers using a range of approaches including paper-based questionnaires, the parent and carers association and the introduction of regular parent and carer forum meetings. Communication between home and school has been improved considerably with weekly newsletters; half-termly curriculum updates of topics and themes to be covered and half-termly homework project information which includes helpful guidance about how parents can support their child's learning at home. There are also an increasing number of opportunities for parents to share learning experiences alongside their children both within and beyond the school. Feedback on events hosted recently is typically very positive. External recognition of the improving quality of the school's work with parents and carers has recently been gained through the Engaging Families Award.

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

Effective use has been made of external review and evaluation to validate you and your leadership team's view of the school's current performance. A number of partnerships with other schools and your involvement in a range of groups, including the Bradford Primary Improvement Partnership, continue to be used to good effect to support your drive for further improvement in provision and outcomes for pupils. The local authority has maintained its support and challenge for the school and you have found this valuable.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, the Director of Children's Services for Bradford.

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli
Her Majesty's Inspector