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Rosemary Dymond
Headteacher
Riverview Junior School
Cimba Wood
Gravesend
DA12 4SD

Dear Mrs Dymond

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Riverview Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 16 September 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 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:

- update the action plan to show clearly how leaders will evaluate robustly the impact of improvements to teaching and leadership
- clarify governors' roles in monitoring each area for improvement
- make full use of the support and challenge offered by the local authority.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, a newly appointed assistant headteacher, a group of middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action

taken since the last inspection. You led me on a tour of the school and I evaluated the school's action plan. I conducted a brief analysis of information about pupils' progress and achievement as well as a range of documents, including a headteacher's report to governors and minutes of recent governing body meetings.

Context

Since the inspection two governors have resigned and have been replaced, a new assistant headteacher has been appointed internally and subject leadership of mathematics and English have been strengthened by new appointments. Two members of staff have left the school and been replaced with newly qualified teachers.

Main findings

Leaders and governors have made a number of improvements since the inspection. They have rightly strengthened the leadership team. The appointment of a new assistant headteacher has meant that there is now a clear focus on standards and a more rigorous and consistent approach to monitoring teaching. Crucially, leaders have taken action to raise expectations of pupils' achievement, especially in English and mathematics. Governors are holding senior leaders to account much more frequently and are asking for specific, concise, evaluative information to support their work. Leaders now have robust systems in place for monitoring pupils' work and tracking their progress every six weeks. They are using information more effectively to hold teachers to account for each pupil's progress.

The school's action plan is focused correctly on the main areas for improvement. Appropriate actions are described though some recent initiatives are not referred to clearly enough. Greater urgency is required for some of the improvements, especially related to pupils' progress in Years 3 and 4. It is not always clear enough how improvements will be evaluated or the pace at which they will be made. It is not yet fully clear how governors will evaluate improvements over time.

Middle leaders are delivering appropriate training to teachers in order to improve teaching. The "Count us all in" programme has been started to tackle pupils' under-achievement in mathematics. The subject leader and year group co-ordinators are monitoring closely teachers' planning, the quality of teaching and the standard of pupils' work. This is helping to raise teachers' expectations about what pupils can achieve and where there are weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and skills. Similarly, the subject leader for English is playing a more effective role in setting high standards and raising expectations through the creation of rigorous policies on handwriting and presentation. Subject leaders and year group co-ordinators have set high expectations about teachers' marking and assessment, including the quality of feedback they give to pupils.

The external review of governance has not yet taken place but it is due to be carried out in the near future. Governors, with the help of the local authority adviser, have rightly changed one of their committees so that it can better focus on standards and pupil progress.

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

Local authority officers have an accurate view of what is required to make the necessary improvements and where the focus of support should be. The headteacher is not yet making full use of this support and challenge, particularly in terms of recommendations about where to go and observe good practice and how to evaluate accurately the school's performance. The local authority has brokered the services of a local consultant to support developments in teaching so that pupils' progress can accelerate more quickly.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Hughes
Her Majesty's Inspector