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Mrs Catherine Logan
Headteacher
Winterton Junior School
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Scunthorpe
Lincolnshire
DN15 9QG

Dear Mrs Logan

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Winterton Junior School, North Lincolnshire

Following my visit to your school on 10 November 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.

This was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection on 3-4 June 2014. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

This monitoring inspection 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:

- ensure that pupils' progress is evidenced by accurate data and supported by examples of work
- improve the monitoring of classroom practice by leaders at all levels by focussing on learning and the contribution that teaching makes to it
- ensure that the strategies designed to raise achievement contained in subject improvement plans, particularly in relation to mathematics clearly identify the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils are expected to acquire
- assign members of the governing body to monitor elements of the school improvement plan by seeing for themselves the impact improvement is having on pupils' learning.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plans were evaluated and visits were made to all classes with the headteacher.

Context

A number of teachers have joined the school during the past twelve months. The current deputy-headteacher took up her appointment at the beginning of September 2014.

The recent inspection in June 2014 judged the behaviour and safety of pupils to be good. The report also identified that 'leaders have successfully brought about changes since the inspection in November 2012, particularly in teaching and behaviour. These improvements are now enabling pupils to learn more effectively and this is starting to raise achievement'.

Main findings

The headteacher and the governing body have taken effective action over the past year to strengthen the quality of teaching and improve leadership at all levels. The results of the end of Year 6 national tests in 2014 were above that expected for their age in reading and the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in writing were above the national average. However, achievement in mathematics was below the national average and not as high as the previous year. The legacy of weak teaching over time has inhibited pupils' progress as they move through the school. Even though recent improvements to teaching and learning are beginning to raise achievement further improvement is needed.

The overall school improvement plan covers all the key areas that require improvement identified at the recent inspection. Leaders have not lost any time implementing a range of initiatives designed to raise pupils' achievement. However, the action plans produced by middle leaders do not make sufficient reference to the skills and knowledge that pupils are expected to acquire. This may well result in a lack of focus and slow the momentum of improvement and this must be avoided at all costs.

Senior leaders have established performance management for all teaching staff. Targets reflect school priorities as well as those designed to improve the performance of individuals.

Good use is made of training to support staff development and leaders check the work of staff on a regular basis. When senior leaders visit lessons however, insufficient emphasis is placed on evaluating the quality of learning and how teaching contributes to pupils' progress. Given that improving pupil progress is central to raising achievement this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

School leaders have established effective mechanisms to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. Pupils progress meetings involving school leaders and individual staff take place every half-term. This allows under-achievement to be identified and supported through a range of intervention strategies. More work is required in order to demonstrate added value in relation to pupils' progress in English and mathematics from Year 2 to the end of Year 6. An analysis of pupil progress data that is evidenced by examples of pupils' work would help to confirm achievement.

The governing body is a much more cohesive unit than at the time of the previous inspection in November 2012. There is a better balance between support and challenge together with a strong desire to improve the quality of education. A recent skills audit has resulted in governors being assigned to tasks for which they are suited. Governors have a good understanding about the quality of teaching, leadership and achievement. They are aware of the initiatives contained within the school improvement plan and receive regular updates from the headteacher about progress. Governors currently monitor the work of the school by linking individual members to curriculum subjects. However, members of the governing body would be better visiting school to see whether or not strategies to secure improvement currently being pursued by senior leaders are making a difference to pupils' learning.

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 has provided effective support in relation to developing the skills of the governing body and in advising the headteacher about personnel issues. This was necessary following the previous inspection if the school was to improve. The authority also identified a local leader in education to support the headteacher and this has helped to strengthen senior leadership. If the school is to improve further the local authority must now focus its support on addressing the issues described above particularly with regard to recording pupils' progress and developing the skills of middle leaders in planning for improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Christopher Keeler

Her Majesty's Inspector