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Ms S Elliott
Headteacher
Milford Junior School
Glenthorne Avenue
Yeovil
BA21 4PG

Dear Ms Elliott

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Milford Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 26 January 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 September 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

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:

- work with the local authority and local infants school to help sustain pupils progress as they change school and to share best practice
- refine and strengthen the link between the school's action plans so that even greater consistency and accountability can be established
- ensure the governing body reviews the school's policies relating to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs so that they reflect current guidance and meet statutory requirements
- ensure that the school's website is compliant with current guidance and meets statutory requirements

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. These meetings were with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher (who is also the schools special education needs coordinator), two governors and a representative from the local authority. A discussion was held with staff that have responsibility for pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 (year group leaders) and the literacy and numeracy leaders: their monitoring and planning folders were examined. School information about pupils' progress and attainment were taken into account. All classes were visited during which time a selection of pupils' mathematics and writing books were reviewed. The school's action plans were evaluated.

Main findings

School records show that pupils' achievements are currently higher than they were at the same time last year. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making better progress in reading in Years 3 and 6, and writing in Years 3 and 4. Pupils entitled to the pupil premium funding are making accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups, with the exception of reading and mathematics in Year 3. These improvements help to demonstrate the raised expectations of teaching staff for the standards pupils should be reaching. These expectations are now more consistent across the school. The improvements are also due to a greater use of data by the leaders of literacy and numeracy and the year group leaders to inform learning activities. In addition, senior leaders have placed greater emphasis on improving the progress that pupils make in KS2 based on their reported starting points in KS1. The school is working more closely with the local infant school to ensure that these starting points are accurate. This work needs to continue to be developed so that when pupils move on from the infant school there is an even greater continuity in the way they are taught. Pupils and teachers need to be able to refer back to the best work that pupils produced before they changed school to sustain achievement and inform the pupils' future work.

Pupils are readily editing their work based on the comments made in their books by teachers. Overall, these comments are informative and help pupils to improve their work. However, while always acknowledged as being read by the pupils, sometimes the quality and impact of the feedback slips. For example, comments such as 'Next time you should try to...' are not necessarily taken into account by the pupil or checked that they have been acted upon, especially if the activity that the comment pertains to is not repeated in the next few days. All pupils have their targets in their books but they do not refer to them often enough to ensure that they keep them in their mind when they are working. Consequently, the reason for them and their effect on learning is diminished.

Pupils are now provided with more learning prompts, which the school records as 'next steps'. The school has generated a bank of 'next steps' activities to support pupils' mathematical understanding which teachers are using, alongside their own

ideas, to successfully help improve pupils' learning. The school is aware that the 'next steps' for literacy are less developed, but has plans to provide a bank of them for literacy too.

The leaders of literacy, numeracy and year group are enjoying their new roles and responsibilities. They have conducted observations of pupils learning in lessons, looked at pupils' books and are keeping track as to how different groups of pupils are achieving. The information gleaned from this monitoring is used to help teachers improve their planning and this has raised teachers' expectations of what standards are required. They have each produced an action plan for their area of responsibility that relates to the overarching school action plan. All of the plans now need to be more closely linked together to ensure greater accountability and shared responsibility. For example, it would be helpful for the plans to have the success criteria for key issues clearly marked so that everyone can see at a glance whether the rate of progress is fast enough. At the moment, the school action plan is too vague in places. This limits the ability of the governing body to check robustly the progress that the school is making in 'getting to good'. Governors continue to develop their understanding about the school and are making better use of this to ask leaders more challenging questions.

The reported policy for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is out of date. The report must comply with [section 69\(2\) of the Children and Families Act 2014 regulation 51](#) and [schedule 1 of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#). In addition, the school's current website is not compliant with current guidance and does not meet statutory requirements. Information that is missing includes details about pupils' achievements and attainment, a link to the Department for Education's school performance tables, the curriculum offered by the school in each academic year for every subject, admission arrangements and the charging and remissions policy.

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 school uses the support and guidance of good quality external specialist consultants, as and when required, in order to help the school securely improve. For example, one is successfully helping the leaders of literacy, numeracy and year groups to develop their leadership skills and work as a leadership team.

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

Yours sincerely

Steffi Penny

Her Majesty's Inspector