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Mrs Kudsia Batool
Headteacher
Pear Tree Community Junior School
Pear Tree Road
Derby
DE23 8PN

Dear Mrs Batool

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Pear Tree Community Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 24 March 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 November 2014. 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 inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior and subject leaders. I had a telephone conversation with the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and met with a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I scrutinised pupils' books and examined other school documentation. During the visit, you joined me on a tour of the school where I spoke with pupils informally about their work. I checked the single central record.

Context

Since the last inspection, three teachers have resigned and three new teachers have been appointed. Two new assistant headteachers have been appointed from among

existing school staff. An English subject leader and a special educational needs leader have also been appointed from among existing school staff.

Main findings

You have responded quickly to the findings of your recent inspection. You and the deputy headteacher demonstrate a determination and drive to raise achievement for the pupils at Pear Tree Junior School. Your plans for improvement focus correctly on the issues raised at the last inspection. You have clearly identified those responsible for leading actions. The role of the IEB is also clearly identified within the plan. However, some of the actions you propose to take are not sharp enough for you to identify quantifiable success criteria. As a result, the IEB is not able to hold you to account with sufficient rigour.

You have improved the quality of teaching by ensuring teachers plan more closely to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. You have developed bespoke training to address weaknesses in teaching and you rigorously hold teachers to account for their work. As a result, the progress pupils are making in reading, writing, and mathematics is beginning to accelerate.

You have developed a strong sense of purpose among the newly formed leadership team. It is clear they share your determination to raise pupils' achievement. They take responsibility to check the quality of teaching and learning regularly and systematically. Subject leaders have a sound knowledge of standards in their subjects. As a result, leaders at all levels challenge their colleagues to improve their work and, consequently, the quality of teaching is improving.

The quality of teachers' marking has improved. Where marking is used well, teachers tell pupils how well they are doing. Teachers provide pupils with comments that support them to think carefully about their work and improve it. However, this is not consistent across the school. In some classes, teachers accept mistakes in grammar and punctuation without comment. Not all teachers present the best modelling of handwriting for their pupils to copy. As a result, the best quality support is not given to all pupils to improve their learning.

External support

The local authority has provided support and funding for a National Leader of Education (NLE) from Taylor Road Primary School. He visits the school regularly to support senior leaders in their work. The NLE is providing very effective support and challenge in checking the quality of teaching and learning. The local authority has also provided the headteacher with support to implement a new staffing structure, including the formation of the new leadership team. It has also provided support to the IEB to begin the formation of a new governing body.

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

Yours sincerely

Jan Connor
Her Majesty's Inspector