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3 December 2012

Mr D Loomes
Headteacher
Easington Colliery Primary School
Whickham Street
Easington Colliery
Peterlee
County Durham
SR8 3DJ

Dear Mr Loomes

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Easington Colliery Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 30 November 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher leaders of subjects, phase leaders, a group of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan and subject leaders' action plans were evaluated. Other documents were scrutinised including minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation, checks on the quality of teaching by senior leaders and subject leaders and external reports on the quality of the school's work.

Context

Since the inspection in September 2012, one member of staff has left the school and one new parent governor has been appointed.

Main findings

The school has responded positively to the issues identified in the September 2012 inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. They have started to tackle weaknesses in teaching and the proportion of good or better teaching is increasing. Subject leaders and phase leaders are developing their skills in checking and evaluating the work of the school through lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and teacher's planning as well as leading meetings to discuss the progress made by pupils.

Senior leaders ensure that any targets for improvement identified for individual staff are followed up. The progress made by pupils and the areas for improvement, identified at the last inspection, are closely linked to performance management arrangements. This has helped to ensure that all school priorities are being implemented by all staff. Discussions with pupils from each year group confirmed that systems, such as those for marking and pupil feedback, are now used by all teachers. The school improvement plan identifies the right priorities and the school is addressing these successfully. Subject leaders have produced their own action plans but it is not always clear how progress on the targets in some of these plans will be measured.

The governing body has appointed a number of new governors recently, including parent governors. A number of governors have developed link roles with leaders of subjects. However, the role of governors in checking on the work of the school is still at an early stage. Governors are keen to develop their skills and would welcome support to do so.

Opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to learn outdoors are slowly improving but there is still a need for further development.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- develop the role of the governing body (HMI recommends that an external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved)
- improve some of the action plans written by subject leaders to ensure that targets are measurable

- ensure that the outdoor provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage improves further.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has provided appropriate support through termly meetings with school leaders and reviews of the school's work. A small amount of additional support is now being provided for a number of pupils to help them improve their writing but it is too early to assess the impact of this. The school has also received effective support from an external consultant which is helping to improve the quality of teaching and strengthen leadership.

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

Yours sincerely

Christine Inkster

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority
- the academy chain where relevant
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.