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Louisa Gurney
Headteacher
Emmbrook Junior School
Emmbrook Road
Wokingham
RG41 1JR

Dear Mrs Gurney

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Emmbrook Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 12 February 2013, 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 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The school's action plans for improvement were evaluated. HMI reviewed information about pupils' progress and the outcomes of senior leaders' monitoring of teaching.

Context

There have been no significant changes to the school's context since the last section 5 inspection.

Main findings

The headteacher and school leaders, including governors, have fully grasped the issues raised in the last section 5 inspection and have correctly focussed most of their early efforts to secure consistently good teaching across the school as quickly

as possible. There is a growing sense of the whole school moving in the same direction and a willingness to improve.

More focussed and rigorous lesson observations and coaching and support for teachers are helping to raise the quality teaching. Inconsistencies in teaching have been identified and acted upon. Teachers' performance management is sharper and leading to clear targets for improvement. Underpinning the school's improvement is a much more robust analysis of pupils' progress. Senior leaders are very aware of the performance of different groups of pupils, including those who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding (government money for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after).

Middle leaders are developing a better understanding about the expectations of their role in school improvement. They are beginning to take on more responsibility for managing their teams and reporting more clearly on the effectiveness of their work.

School action plans cover the key areas requiring improvement but would benefit from sharper timescales, clearer 'milestones for success' and tighter connections between the post inspection plan and the school improvement plan.

There have been recent changes to the membership of the Governing Body. Governors are developing a range of activities to ensure that they can find out more efficiently and effectively how well the school is improving. Their work is better coordinated and already beginning to provide the information needed to enable them to ask informed and challenging questions of the headteacher and senior leaders. The governing body has already improved its knowledge of key information about the progress of different groups of pupils.

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:

- Consolidate the post-inspection action planning to:
 - give sharper timescales for key 'milestones to success'.
 - clarify links between post inspection planning, the overall school plan and the schools' performance targets about improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Review the work of the governing body in twelve months to check the effectiveness of its new procedures.

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

External support

The headteacher and governors are using a wide range of external support and initiatives. The local authority leads a school improvement board that meets once per term at the school to check on the progress of plans. A further range of external support from the local authority, an advanced skill teacher and a Local Leader in Education are beginning to have a positive impact on raising the expertise of staff.

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

Yours sincerely

Daniel Towl
Her Majesty's Inspector