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Mrs Linda Sullivan
Headteacher
Dale Community Primary School
Porter Road
Derby
DE23 6NL

Dear Mrs Sullivan

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

Following my visit to your school on 3 May 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) held meetings with you, other senior leaders, a representative of the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors. He visited all classes, looked at the school assessment information and evaluated the school improvement plan.

Context

Since the last inspection, the inclusion manager has left the school. A new inclusion manager has been appointed and will begin duties at the start of the autumn term 2013.

Main findings

Following the last inspection, you, other school leaders and the governing body acted with urgency and determination to address the areas for improvement identified by the inspectors. You have introduced several new initiatives, the most important of which was a new system for the tracking of pupils' progress. You and other school leaders now talk knowledgeably about the achievement of all groups of pupils. Using this information, you hold teachers to account much more effectively for pupils' achievement, and identify more accurately any training that teachers need to improve their teaching skills. Staff training has also enabled all teachers to understand the assessment data so that they can identify those pupils making good progress and those who need additional support. Teachers comment that this knowledge has raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve. The school's monitoring shows that teaching is now better than at the time of the last inspection. The school's assessment data show that the achievement of all groups of pupils is beginning to improve. The introduction of a new handwriting policy is having a marked impact on improving the quality of pupils' handwriting across the school.

A revised planning format is helping teachers make sure that the work they give to pupils in lessons is not too easy or too hard. You and other senior leaders check in lessons to make sure that what is taught matches the planning and provides the right challenge for pupils of all abilities. A new system for measuring pupils' progress in calculations has been introduced and is allowing teachers and leaders to check on pupils' progress in this aspect of mathematics.

You and other senior leaders are now undertaking more checks on the quality of teaching in lessons and are looking more closely at the work in pupils' books. Daily 'drop-ins' and formal lesson observations mean that you now have a good knowledge where teaching still requires improvement. Teachers are regularly advised how to improve their teaching and are given support to do so. Work with external consultants is helping many teachers improve their skills.

The school improvement plan does not reflect all the improvements made since the last inspection and does not give to the governing body an accurate account of what you intend the pupils to achieve before the next inspection. Although you and the other leaders now have a wealth of useful information on pupils' attainment and progress, there are no short-term pupil achievement targets so that you, other school leaders and the governing body know that the pupils are on course to make the rapid improvements necessary.

The governing body is correctly reviewing its structure so that it plays a more strategic role in school improvement. This role will be achieved more effectively if governors are provided with details of the achievement of all groups of pupils throughout the school.

You, other senior leaders and the governing body must continue to focus your attention on ensuring that all teaching is consistently good or better. The next HMI visit will more closely evaluate the quality of teaching through joint observations with you and other senior leaders.

You, other 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 ensure that:

- the plan for improvement accurately identifies the improvements to be made before the next full inspection and short-term pupil achievement targets are clearly set out and linked to the plan
- the plan for the governing body to play a more strategic role in school improvement is implemented and governors have a good knowledge and understanding of the details of the achievement of all groups of pupils throughout the school.

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

External support

The local authority is now providing a higher degree of support to the school's leaders and has provided helpful advice about how to record pupils' achievement. The local authority has agreed to discuss with the governing body, you and other senior leaders how this support can be extended to help the school improve further.

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

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers
Her Majesty's Inspector