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11 December 2012

Sian McGrath
Headteacher
Michaelchurch Escley Primary School
Michaelchurch Escley
Hereford
HR2 0PT

Dear Mrs McGrath

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

Following my visit to your school on 10 December 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, a senior leader, members of the Governing Body including the Chair, a small group of pupils, two parents and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated as was the behaviour improvement plan and other documents including data and tracking information on pupil achievement.

Context

There have been no changes since the school was inspected in September 2012

Main findings

Since her appointment in September the headteacher has accurately identified priorities for improvement. She has successfully engaged the whole school community, including pupils and parents, in focusing on raising standards and improving pupils' attitudes to learning. Teachers are held to account through regular lesson observations and pupil progress meetings. Teachers take greater responsibility for pupil data. The school tracking system ensures that pupils at risk of not making enough progress are quickly identified. Recent assessments are in place as a starting point to monitor pupil progress.

A daily phonics lesson has been introduced to accelerate pupils' progress in reading. Pupils report that there have been improvements to behaviour and attitudes to learning as a result of more engaging lessons. Parents recognise an increased 'impetus and momentum' since the new headteacher started. The amalgamated governing body is experienced and knowledgeable. It fully supports the need to raise pupil achievement and is challenging leaders effectively through questioning and visits to the school including observation of lessons.

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 the behaviour for learning action plan has clear milestones and dates and indicates who is responsible for monitoring and evaluating its impact
- Monitor the effectiveness of how well teaching assistants are deployed and what is the impact of intervention and support for pupils
- Provide further learning opportunities for those pupils who have been identified as not making sufficient progress to narrow the gap in attainment through more effective support.

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

External support

The local authority is providing effective support for the school. It has been actively involved in monitoring teaching, supporting newly qualified staff and the governing body and performance management. It has also provided additional consultancy for literacy and early years.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector