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5 December 2012

Nichola Way
Headteacher
Leys Junior School
Flowery Leys Lane
Alfreton
DE55 7HA

Dear Mrs Way

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

Following my visit to your school on 4 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 and other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated, all classrooms were visited, groups of pupils were spoken to and a sample of pupils' work was checked.

Context

There have been no important changes since the last inspection when the school was judged to require improvement.

Main findings

The school improvement plan specifies the actions to be taken and the expected outcomes to be achieved. The individual members of staff responsible for implementing the actions and the timescales for completion are also identified. Staff, parents and governors were consulted in devising the plan and so there is a widely shared understanding of the improvements the school is seeking to make. Actions to

increase the frequency of guided reading sessions, which senior leaders expect to have a greater impact on achievement than some other actions in the plan, are rightly given priority. Other elements in the plan revolve around establishing greater clarity and consistency in what is expected of teachers in areas such as marking pupils' books. A scrutiny of a sample of pupils' books showed teachers to be adhering to the marking policy. It is clear too that the standard of pupils' handwriting is improving.

The headteacher is delegating more responsibility to senior and subject leaders for making improvements than they have been accustomed to. Subject leaders support this approach but are uncertain about what best practice looks like in their areas of responsibility.

The school judges around half of the teaching to be currently good and about half as requiring improvement. The school's target is for almost all teaching to be consistently good by the summer of 2013.

Members of the governing body do not understand the school's performance data well enough to be able to support and challenge the school to improve quickly. They are unclear about how inspection judgements are arrived at and about how much the school will need to improve to become a good school.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take 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:

- arrange for the headteacher and the subject leaders for English and mathematics to attend Ofsted best practice seminars
- invite HMI to train the governing body on the school inspection framework and on interpreting the school's performance data
- establish links with an outstanding junior school whose teachers can coach teachers at this school in improving their practice
- schedule another visit to the school by HMI to check on pupil progress and to check on the proportion of teaching that is good or better.

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

External support

The local authority has provided consultancy support, conducted joint evaluations of the quality of teaching with the headteacher and reviewed pupil progress. The school improvement partner knows the school well and the steps it needs to take next to become a good school. She has arranged for teachers to visit other schools to see good practice.

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

Yours sincerely

David Anstead
Her Majesty's Inspector