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14 December 2012

Mrs L Bates
Gorse Hill Primary School
Burleigh Road
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Dear Mrs Bates

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

Following my visit to your school on 14 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 October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated, a walk around lessons took place and school documentation was examined.

Main findings

The school has responded well to the October inspection and leaders report it has supported the school in providing a clear way forward. There is a commitment to secure school improvement and a determination by the headteacher to improve outcomes across the school. A revised action plan has been created following the inspection, focusing on the areas which were identified for improvement. The plan clearly show what actions will be taken to secure improvement and indicate how leaders will monitor and evaluate the actions. Although procedures to monitor the

plan are in place they are not as rigorous as they might be and do not sufficiently involve the governing body.

Improving the quality of teaching is a focus for the school and the headteacher has planned training for all staff to improve the quality of teaching. This includes improving standards in writing and developing ways of checking on how well pupils are achieving in lessons.

Training is in place to develop teachers' leadership skills. This will help subject leaders improve the ways in which they monitor their subject areas. At the present time most of the formal monitoring is carried out by the headteacher. However, plans are in place for more staff to take ownership of driving forward and evaluating performance in a range of subjects. Subject leaders are developing their confidence in using data to ensure they are better informed about their areas of responsibility.

A new marking policy has been implemented and this is designed to provide pupils with a greater insight of how to improve their work. Leaders are beginning to evaluate the difference this is making to pupils' rates of progress.

Data are collected on a termly basis and the information collected informs useful pupil progress meetings. However, the ways in which this information is gathered is not rigorous enough. This is because it does not measure small steps of progress. Currently the measures used are too wide to see how well pupils are progressing.

The Chair of the Governing Body is knowledgeable and insightful. She provides good support and challenge to the Headteacher. Training has been delivered to the governing body to develop their understanding and use of data. Some subject leaders report to governors on their areas of responsibility. However, the system of linking governors to subject areas is unclear. As a result leaders are not held to account for their actions enough. The Chair of the Governing Body is keen to pursue an external review to improve their work across the 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:

- ensure all leaders rigorously and regularly monitor the school action plan to check all agreed actions are on-track to be completed
- develop support programmes for teachers to ensure all teaching is at least good
- undertake an external review of the governing body
- further develop tracking procedures so that smaller measures of progress can be identified for all pupils.

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

External support

The local authority is reviewing the work of the school closely. Officers from the local authority are reviewing the school's performance as well as providing support to secure improvement. The Early Years Foundation Stage is receiving support from the local authority consultant who is developing provision in Nursery and the Reception classes. The local authority has identified consultant support for phonics and mathematics. A consultant will develop leadership and management by working with subject leaders commencing in the spring term. Gorse Hill is beginning to work more closely with a local outstanding primary school.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Millward
Her Majesty's Inspector