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13 December 2012

Mrs Yvonne Brown
Headteacher
St John's CofE Primary School Mosley Common
Commonside Road
Worsley
Manchester
M28 1AE

Dear Mrs Brown

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St John's CofE Primary School Mosley Common

Following my visit to your school on 12 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 Associate headteacher, four members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Minutes from governing body meetings were considered as were the school's monitoring records. The inspector was taken on a tour of the school to meet staff and pupils.

Context

The Reception and Year 2 classes are being taught by supply teachers to cover teacher absence. One teacher has tendered her resignation and will leave at the end of the spring term.

Main findings

Senior leaders and governors fully accept the shortcomings identified in the recent inspection and all are resolute in their determination to become a good school. The school development plan is based on an honest analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The plan has been amended to take account of the inspection issues and appropriate

actions are in place to make the school better. Nonetheless, the criteria to measure success are not precise enough and there are no clear milestones to show when actions will be completed. The plans for improving the Early Years Foundation Stage and the role of the governing body are not of similar quality to the plans for other priorities.

Much is in place to improve teaching. Whole-school training, opportunities for staff to work with teachers from a partner school and more rigorous performance management procedures are all established. The systems to check on teaching are increasingly robust because teachers receive clear guidance to help them know what to do next. Sharp plans are in place to support those teachers who need extra help to improve. Improved systems for checking pupils' progress mean teachers are being held to account more vigorously. The Early Years Foundation Stage environment is becoming more purposeful and plans are underway to improve the outdoor area. Senior leaders are handling staff absence appropriately. Nonetheless, this is a potential barrier to securing rapid success against some of the areas identified in the inspection report. Furthermore, senior leaders are shouldering almost all of the responsibility to secure improvement because the skills of middle leaders are not yet developed well enough.

The governing body are improving in their role as critical partners because they have received training to help them become more effective in their role. A monitoring committee has been established and governors are beginning to ask more questions because of the wider range of information they receive.

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 recommends that further action is taken to:

- review the school development plan so there are clear milestones for action across the year and the criteria to measure success are precise and linked to pupil outcomes
- amend the plans for improving governance and the Early Years Foundation Stage so they match the quality plans in place for other priorities
- give greater consideration to developing other leaders so responsibility for bringing about improvement is shared more evenly across the school.

External support

The school is making very good use of effective external support. Links with a partner school are fully exploited to support teachers, build expertise and raise expectations. External consultants are providing valuable guidance and helping senior leaders determine their next steps. The local authority School Development Adviser visits the school frequently to ensure the school receives the support it needs. The local authority and the Diocese are offering financial assistance to help the school reach their goals.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Wigan and the Director of Manchester Diocese.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Olsson
Her Majesty's Inspector