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11 December 2012

Mrs H Mastrodonardo
Vernon Park Primary School
Peak Street
Stockport
Cheshire
SK1 2NF

Dear Mrs Mastrodonardo

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

Following my visit to your school on 11 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, members 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 recently established leadership team has created effective detailed plans to secure school improvement. The action plans are based on the areas for improvement identified at the October Ofsted inspection; stating clearly the proposed actions and the intended outcomes. The school has identified how key staff will monitor the effectiveness and success of the actions. Some key areas however do not involve the governing body enough.

All leaders have responded well to the inspection in October 2012. They report that the inspection has provided the momentum to drive change more quickly and all leaders are determined to improve the school's performance to good. Actions have already started, including focused observations of learning in classrooms and detailed scrutiny of pupils' books. A new marking policy has been adopted and leaders check that is used consistently by all teachers. Teachers' planning has been developed and now follows an agreed format. While monitoring procedures are in place, they are not regular enough to hold all staff to account. Leaders are aware that some teaching still requires improvement.

As writing was identified as an area for improvement, leaders sensibly altered the way in which it is managed. Subject leaders are now responsible for leading either reading or writing and plans are in place to provide pupils with more opportunities to write for extended periods of time.

Pupil performance data are collected on a termly basis and small measurable steps of progress are recorded. Furthermore the school analyses how groups of pupils perform. This provides an effective overview of standards across the school and is increasingly shared with the governing body. Useful and focused pupil progress meetings are now more rigorously holding teachers to account for the progress pupils make.

Governors are increasingly aware of the strengths and weaknesses in school and are keen to improve ways of holding the school to account. Some governors have received training to help them better understand data. The governing body is keen to pursue an external review of their performance by the local authority to enable them to become more effective. Named governors who are linked to specific subjects and areas of responsibility are in place and subject leaders are encouraged to report to governors on how they intend to improve their subject areas. The monitoring and evaluation committee plans to meet more regularly to evaluate the school's successes identified in the action plan.

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:

- rigorously and regularly monitor all aspects of teaching and learning to support pupils making better progress
- develop support programmes for teachers to ensure all teaching is at least good
- give greater emphasis to pupils' writing in all subjects.

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

External support

A wide range of support is provided by the local authority to support the school moving to good. The focus to improve the quality of teaching is clear and local authority literacy and numeracy consultants have planned actions to help teachers improve. The school has linked with a local outstanding primary school to help Vernon Park improve further, focusing on improving the quality of teaching and the moderation of pupils' work. Some teachers are involved with specific projects for example the Year 2 teacher is working with teachers in other schools to improve writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Millward
Her Majesty's Inspector