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21 January 2013

Jane Bright
Headteacher
Temple Mill Primary School
Cliffe Road
Rochester
ME2 3NL

Dear Ms Bright

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

Following my visit to your school on 21 January 2013, 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 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, mathematics subject leader, three members of the governing body and the school's local authority challenge and improvement lead. The school improvement plan, governors' action plan and subject action plans were evaluated. Minutes of governing body meetings and records of visits by governors and local authority support staff were also looked at.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the last inspection. One new parent governor has been appointed and there is one local authority governor vacancy.

Main findings

The senior leaders have prioritised improving teaching. Following meetings with teachers to review the progress that pupils are making, teaching assistants have been redeployed to make better use of their skills. Mathematics in Years 5 and 6 is no longer taught in ability groups. Additional support is being provided to pupils who are not working at the levels expected for their age in these classes by a Higher Level Teaching Assistant under the direction of the special educational needs coordinator. Daily teaching of basic literacy and mathematics skills have been introduced to close any gaps in pupils' knowledge. The school's monitoring information shows that although some pupils are beginning to make faster progress there are still inconsistencies in different subjects and classes.

The new governing body has completed training on how to interpret school performance data. A few key governors are beginning to use this to ask probing questions about how the progress that pupils make is improving. They are visiting the school more regularly but understand that these visits need to be more focused and involve more members of the governing body if they are to help the school improve and hold leaders accountable more robustly.

The school has a number of action plans, some of which are unnecessary because they duplicate what is in others. The plans prioritise the relevant areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. They all lack quantifiable targets and clear milestones against which to evaluate the progress made in improving teaching and pupils' achievement. As a consequence, governors and leaders are not clear what actions are having the most impact and what actions are less effective. They check that actions have taken place rather than what difference they have made. Leaders and governors are aware that this information is necessary to hold staff to account for improvement.

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 by the school to:

- reduce and sharpen the plans for improvement by including quantifiable targets, success measures and milestones against which the progress being made can be measured
- work with the local authority and the Local Leader of Education to share best practice in self-evaluation so that senior leaders and governors hone their skills in evaluating the impact they are having on pupils' achievements
- use Ofsted's report 'School governance: learning from the best' so that leaders and governors know how to work together more effectively.

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

External support

The local authority has provided a range of appropriate support and holds regular meetings to challenge leaders to improve the achievement of pupils more rapidly. Governor training on school data has been well received and the local authority has brokered the services of a Local Leader of Education to strengthen the leadership skills of senior leaders. Two senior leaders are taking part in leadership development programme to learn more about effective leadership in other schools. Three teachers are being coached by a teaching and learning consultant to develop more consistently good classroom practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Jackie Krafft
Her Majesty's Inspector