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Elizabeth Blake
Headteacher
Orchard Way Primary School
Orchard Way
Shirley
Croydon
Surrey
CR0 7NJ

Dear Miss Blake

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Orchard Way Primary School

Following my visit to your school on Friday 25 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 you, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school post-Ofsted improvement plan was evaluated. Brief visits were made to classrooms to look at the impact of the actions which the school has taken since the previous inspection. A range of documentation was reviewed, including records of senior leaders' observations of lessons, pupil progress data and documents relating to governance of the school.

Context

Since the previous inspection, one teacher has left the school and another teacher is on maternity leave. Both teachers have temporarily been replaced by teachers employed on fixed-term contracts.

Main findings

The school improvement plan has sensible priorities and addresses all the areas for improvement identified in the recent inspection. The plan includes appropriate actions and has sensible timescales and success criteria for judging progress. However, the plan does not always make clear how the various initiatives will be monitored or how and when the governing body will check that the school's actions are making a difference to improving the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Senior leaders scrutinise teaching closely and provide teachers with useful feedback, including targets for improvement. Pupils' targets have been reviewed so that they are more challenging and can easily be understood by pupils and parents. Governors have benefited from training that has helped them become more knowledgeable about understanding performance data provided by the school and they are better able to ask challenging questions about pupils' progress. Governors have commissioned the local authority to conduct a teaching and learning review. The purpose of this review is to test the school's own evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. Additional governors have been recruited to strengthen the governing body.

Senior leaders and governors are taking 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 that the school improvement plan specifies clearly how the planned improvements will be monitored and how governors will judge the impact of the school's improvement plan, particularly in relation to improving teaching and the impact this has on improving pupils' achievement.

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

External support

The local authority has provided training for the governing body and has worked with the school to help develop the school's improvement plan and set an accurate baseline for judging improvements to teaching. A local authority officer is working with the school to develop the teaching of mathematics. The local authority has also brokered the support of a headteacher from another school to aid improvement. These actions have helped strengthen leadership and are helping to improve the quality of teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Robert Ellis
Her Majesty's Inspector