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Mr Lee Batstone
Madley Primary School
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Hereford
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Dear Mr Batstone

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

Following my visit to your school on 01 February 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, members of staff and the governing body 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 on 28 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders for English and mathematics, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The school's plan for improvement was evaluated and other documents were considered. Information about pupils' current attainment and progress was examined.

Context

One new teacher joined the school at the start of this term. There have been no other changes to the school's context since the inspection in November.

Main findings

A considerable amount of work has been done in a short space of time on all three of the areas for improvement. Staff and the governing body are keen that the school improves as quickly as possible and there is a sense of enthusiasm and a positive approach to change. Pupils' progress is regularly checked; assessments of attainment and progress are now made every six weeks and the outcomes are analysed and discussed by the school's leaders, the governing body and individual

members of staff. Next steps for groups and individual pupils are detailed in a raising attainment plan for each year group. Across the school, pupils' progress is beginning to accelerate.

The governing body has acted quickly to strengthen the ways in which it evaluates how well the school is doing and to increase the level of challenge; for example, a set of questions has been devised to guide their discussions about assessment information. Governors are working with subject leaders to evaluate aspects of provision. Training to deepen governors' understanding of their role is planned.

The school's ambition is to be judged good by the time of its next inspection. The 'requires improvement to good' plan contains clearly quantifiable targets against which progress can be plotted. However, it is not clear that achieving these targets will mean that the school would be judged good at an inspection, and the timescale in which they are expected to be reached is not explicit, making it harder to judge progress towards them.

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:

- strengthen the improvement plan by using the grade descriptions for good achievement in the inspection handbook to make sure that the targets in the plan match what is needed for achievement in English and mathematics to be judged good
- review the timescale for 'getting to good' to make sure that it is achievable and include interim 'milestones' so that progress towards the targets can more readily be evaluated.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection. I will approach a school in another local authority with a view to sharing the ways assessment data is used to drive improvement. Please send me a copy of the data booklet after its Easter update. I will visit the school again during the summer term 2013 to work alongside subject and other leaders and to meet with members of the governing body.

External support

Senior and subject leaders have made productive links with good and outstanding schools both within Herefordshire and beyond, and are very keen to observe and learn from others' practice.

The local authority has provided a good deal of well-targeted support for teachers and the governing body and is keeping a close watch on progress. Monthly project group meetings are held to review progress. In the longer term, the level of support

should reduce, so that the school's leaders can demonstrate their ability to continue to evaluate progress and drive improvements themselves.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda McGill
Her Majesty's Inspector