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4 February 2013

Mr G Oulton
Headteacher
Northlands Wood Community Primary School
Beech Hill
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 3RX

Dear Mr Oulton

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Northlands Wood Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 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 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, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school action plan was evaluated. Documentation about teachers' performance management and the use of the government additional funding, known as pupil premium, was considered. The inspector joined the headteacher and chair of the governing body on a tour of the school to meet staff and pupils.

Context

There have been no significant changes to the school since the section 5 inspection.

Main findings

The headteacher has taken a strong lead in tackling areas for improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. He is well supported by the governing

body and members have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses overall. At the time of the recent inspection the school was already beginning to address a number of areas for development through the school's development planning process. However, senior leaders, including governors, are rightly using a separate action plan in order to focus more specifically on the areas which will help the school improve most swiftly. Goals included in this plan are well stated, but the steps to be taken in order to achieve them successfully are not always expressed as clearly as they might be. As a result, it is difficult for governors to monitor and evaluate the rate of progress towards each goal.

Comprehensive systems to set targets and monitor the progress of all pupils have been established and the school is in the process of extending these further. Actions taken to improve the rate of progress for identified pupils are now having evident impact on writing and mathematics as well as more generally in Key Stage 2. While teaching is not yet consistently good, regular observations and reviews of teachers' performance are being used effectively to help teachers understand more clearly what is expected of them. Senior and middle leaders are gradually developing their roles.

Senior leaders and governors are beginning 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 to:

- help the governing body to maintain an overview of progress by making sure that key steps and evaluations are stated clearly and succinctly on the action plan
- support senior and middle leaders to become more securely established in their roles as leaders of learning.

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

External support

There has been a recent change in personnel but the school is already making good use of the support available from the local authority. Good plans are in place for further work to be done. Teachers are also visiting other schools to see different ways of working.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Duffy
Her Majesty's Inspector