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1 March 2013

Mrs Irene Baldry
Headteacher
Portsmouth Primary School
Sundridge Close
Portsmouth
Cosham
PO6 3JL

Dear Mrs Baldry

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

Following my visit to your school on 1 March 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 December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leadership team, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school action plan was evaluated along with other documents relating to monitoring and evaluation, lesson observations and performance management. The inspector was taken on a tour of the school by the headteacher.

Context

There has been no change in the school's status or changes in key personnel since the section 5 inspection.

Main findings

The headteacher and her strong senior leadership team have made a very good start in tackling the areas for improvement identified at the section 5 inspection. They have prepared an action plan that, although it is too long, deals in detail with these areas and places a high priority on improving teaching and learning as the key to raising achievement. The goals for success in the plan are appropriately linked to the inspection issues. An intensive programme for monitoring progress in implementing the plan is in place using a variety of strategies such as examining teachers' planning and pupils' work. Leaders rightly intend to check the impact made on pupils' progress, although measurable targets are not always stated clearly enough for this to be rigorous. The action plan covers the need to improve outdoor activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage; however this is hindered by possible changes to school accommodation in light of predicted significant increases in pupil numbers.

The headteacher is well supported by the governing body who have responded positively to the outcomes from the inspection. Governors now have a much clearer view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are actively involved in visiting and reporting on the school's progress and are setting up smaller focused groups to concentrate on specific areas for improvement. The governors are much clearer about their own needs in terms of training to enhance their understanding of data on pupils' performance so they can challenge and support the school.

Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- improve the governing body's skills in evaluating pupil performance data so they can challenge and support the school more effectively
- clarify how much outdoor space is required to meet future needs in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that work to improve the quality of provision can take place quickly.

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

External support

The headteacher is making good use of the support available from the local authority as well as from local schools, including an outstanding school. Teachers have visited other schools to see different ways of working and observe outstanding practice. This support has been effective in allowing teachers to gain a wider perspective on teaching and so improve the quality of their own work.

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

Yours sincerely

Christine Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector