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8 March 2013

Mrs Sarah Tarrant
Headteacher
Ashford Park Primary School
Station Crescent
Ashford
TW15 3HN

Dear Mrs Tarrant

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

Following my visit to your school on 7 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 and the deputy headteacher, English and mathematics leaders, the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plans were evaluated. The inspector walked around classes, talked with pupils about their work and looked at work in pupils' books.

Context

Two teachers have left the school since the previous inspection and one new teacher has taken up a post in the school.

Main findings

There is a commitment to improve teaching. Teachers and leaders are very clear about what they are trying to achieve. Subject leadership for mathematics and English is developing. Each subject has a team of teachers who take responsibility for particular aspects. Each team is led by a senior leader who ensures that the thinking and actions of the team are coordinated. These teams are developing confidence in monitoring improvements in their particular areas.

Senior leaders have a clear vision for the school and have had a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching throughout the school. They have produced a plan that focuses on priorities for improvement. Some of the intentions outlined in this plan are written in overly complex language and this makes it difficult to understand exactly what the school hopes to achieve. Similarly, the plan does not set out clear mile stones and this means that governors and senior leaders do not have a shared understanding of how to evaluate success.

The governing body have sensibly organised a committee to focus on monitoring the school's journey towards being good. This committee is beginning to consider progress over time and the impact improvements are having. Governors are very supportive of the actions being taken but they struggle to clearly define the impact of school improvement on the achievement of pupils.

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:

- improve school improvement plans so they clearly state the intended actions and the subsequent impact of these in the short, medium and long term
- ensure that governors are able to fully hold leaders to account for the actions taken
- ensure that subject plans are tightly aligned to the overarching strategic plan so they can be seen to contribute towards overall objectives.

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

External support

The local authority has provided some support for developing leadership. Mathematics and English advisors have worked alongside middle leaders in developing their skills. Senior leaders are challenged termly by a school improvement advisor; although it is clear that more could have been done to challenge the school to improve its action planning and systems for evaluating improvements. The school is very proactive in seeking examples of good practice and have visited several outstanding schools to seek answers and inspiration. Equally, leaders have an understanding of the findings of surveys and reports, published by Ofsted and others, and are using these to influence their thinking.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Sheridan
Her Majesty's Inspector