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Mrs Margaret Blease-Bourne
Headteacher
Elworth Hall Primary School
Lawton Way
Elworth
Sandbach
Cheshire
CW11 1TE

Dear Mrs Blease-Bourne

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

Following my visit to your school on 21 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 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit I met with you, the Chair of Governors, a group of Year 6 pupils and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. You also accompanied me on a tour of the school. During this tour I was able to talk to some teachers and I also observed some of the activities pupils were engaged in at the start of the day, for example quiet reading. I also looked at a range of documentation including the school development plan and the post-inspection action plan. I also examined children's work in a sample of their books.

Context

Since the previous inspection, one new teacher has joined the school. Three teachers have enrolled on the National College for School Leadership's outstanding teacher programme.

Main findings

The governors accept that the outcomes of the recent inspection are fair and that the areas for improvement highlighted in the report are the right ones for the school.

You and your senior colleagues have acted quickly in producing detailed plans to improve the quality of teaching and learning. You have taken rapid action to:

- strengthen lesson planning so that teachers take into account the needs of all pupils
- improve the quality of marking.

Since the inspection the system for checking the quality of teaching has been strengthened. Teachers are more accountable for the quality of their work in the classroom and for the achievement of their pupils.

The school development plan identifies the main priorities for improvement and is underpinned by a separate post-inspection action plan. This plan describes the actions that leaders and managers will take to improve the quality of teaching, improve standards in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and increase the progress pupils make in English at Key Stage 2. Responsibility for overseeing aspects of the action plan is shared amongst senior and middle leaders. This is strengthening the capacity of leadership and management across the school.

Although planning is detailed it lacks precision. The targets for improvement described in both plans are not in an order of priority. So it is not clear which of them are the most important. In addition, not enough consideration has been given to how the pace of improvement is going to be managed. Consequently some of the timescales in the post-inspection action plan are unrealistic, with a large number of improvement activities scheduled to take place at the same time.

You, your senior colleagues and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent Section 5 inspection. Following my visit to the school, I recommend that you take further action to:

- sharpen the school development and post-inspection action plans so that it is clear what the order of priorities are
- ensure that the timescales in the post-inspection action plan are realistic so that the school's improvement programme can be effectively managed
- enable those teachers on the outstanding teacher programme to share their good practice with colleagues, so that they continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school.

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

External support

The local authority is working effectively with you and your team to provide help and support tailored to the needs of the school. Officers have arranged for a consultant headteacher to work with staff in the school to improve the assessment of pupils' writing. External consultants have provided training for senior leaders in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school including gathering reliable and accurate information on the quality of teaching and marking of pupils' work. An external consultant has also been working with the curriculum leader for mathematics to improve the quality of mathematics teaching in Key Stage 1.

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

Yours sincerely

Charles Lowry

Her Majesty's Inspector