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Mrs Ann Mars
Stoke Primary School
Briton Road
Coventry
CV2 4LF

Dear Mrs Mars

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

Following my visit to your school on 18 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 11 December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the acting headteacher, other senior leaders, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated. The school's records of its monitoring and evaluation activities were also scrutinised.

Context

The acting headteacher is continuing to lead the school. She is now supported by an acting deputy headteacher. A new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed in January.

Main findings

The school has revised its improvement plan to take into account the areas for improvement identified at the recent inspection. All of the areas for improvement are

covered in the improvement plan. However, the plan does not identify clearly when monitoring activities will be carried out or the role that governors will play in checking the impact of the actions taken. The plan also lacks information about the cost of some improvement activities. This makes it difficult for governors to check that resources are used efficiently.

School leaders have acted promptly to eradicate inadequate teaching. They are implementing appropriate strategies to improve the effectiveness of teachers whose practice requires improvement. There is good evidence that they are monitoring the quality of marking rigorously and setting very clear targets for improvement. However, feedback following lesson observations is less helpful. Typically there is little detail about the subject being taught, the precise skills being gained or the impact that the teaching is having on different groups of learners.

Governors are now receiving easily understood information about the school's performance from the acting headteacher. This is helping them to ask challenging questions about how well pupils are learning. However, there remain vacancies on the governing body. Governors recognise that they need to develop further the skills which will enable them to drive improvement and ensure that the school improves rapidly.

Senior leaders and governors have begun 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:

- ensure the school improvement plan includes detail of the role of governors in monitoring and evaluation, dates when actions, including monitoring, will occur and the cost of improvement activities
- strengthen the school's monitoring of learning by reporting clearly on pupils' learning following lesson observations
- secure an external review of governance to identify clearly areas where governors require training to enable them to hold school leaders to account and drive improvement
- recruit governors with the required skills to fill vacant positions on the governing body.

HMI will

- provide the Chair of the Governing Body with details of how to access Ofsted good practice surveys on governance, 'Getting to good' and the use of the pupil premium.

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

External support

The local authority has provided consultant support to improve teaching. It has established a school improvement board, which met in January to review the school's response to the inspection. A review of progress planned for February was postponed. The local authority is not monitoring the school's progress closely enough to ensure that the school is improving its provision and outcomes. The school does have helpful links with other local schools. However, the school should consider establishing partnerships with national leaders of education, local leaders of education or teaching schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Anthony O'Malley
Her Majesty's Inspector