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Louise Brealey
Hazel Slade Community Primary School
Cannock Wood Street
Hazel Slade
Cannock
WS12 5PN

Dear Mrs Brealey

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Hazel Slade Community Primary School, Staffordshire local authority.

Following my visit to your school on 3 May 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, I held meetings with you, the senior leadership team, representatives from the governing body, a representative of the local authority and the Local Leader of Education. The school improvement plan was evaluated; I visited a number of lessons and examined school documentation. I looked at the quality of work in pupils' books.

Context

Since the last inspection, one teacher has resigned and one teacher has returned to work following a maternity leave. There have been a series of temporary teachers in one class. Governors have appointed a new office manager and one new governor has joined the governing body.

Main findings

You, along with senior leaders and the governing body have responded positively to the inspection that took place in December 2012 and are working hard to improve the school. You have adapted the school development plan to reflect the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The plan lists activities that will support school improvement and shows how these actions will be monitored. Governors are beginning to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's actions. Although the plan identifies what the school will do to improve in this academic year, there are no actions planned beyond July 2013.

You quite rightly identified improving teaching and learning as the main priority for the school. There has been a significant training programme for all staff to improve the quality of teaching. This has included improving the marking of pupils' books, reviewing the criteria for good teaching and specific guidance on how to teach calculation.

Your observations of teaching indicate that teachers are becoming more skilful in making accurate assessments of pupils' achievements. As a result, teachers are now able to better identify those pupils who are beginning to fall behind. Teaching assistants have received training on how to deliver intervention programmes. These are designed to help pupils catch up with their learning. However, there is currently no evidence of how effective these programmes are because they have only very recently been introduced. Although information about pupils' progress is collected regularly, it is not analysed or evaluated enough and as a result, governors are not receiving enough detailed information about the outcomes for all pupils.

Improving writing is a priority for the school. Pupils are now provided with more opportunities to write for extended periods of time. A literacy consultant is working with teachers to improve the quality of teaching and your English subject leader has planned activities to encourage writing across all areas of the curriculum. However, there is little evidence of this impacting on levels of attainment. Furthermore, teacher expectations of the standards pupils can reach are not high enough. As a result too much work in books is poorly presented and in some subjects the written work is not as good as it might be.

You have carried out a range of monitoring activities to check the effectiveness of teaching and to see how this impacts on pupils' achievement. However, monitoring is not rigorous enough and as a result teachers are not held fully accountable for the progress of the pupils in their class. You acknowledge teaching needs to improve. Your monitoring provides teachers with feedback by identifying strengths and areas for development. However, teachers have not received individual plans of support to help them improve their work.

Subject leaders are developing their roles. They are using data to inform what actions they take and are increasingly involved in the monitoring of their subject areas. However, they have not received sufficient training and have not had the

opportunity to observe how effective subject leaders in other schools lead their subjects.

The governing body shows a commitment to help improve the school. They have received training and now have a greater understanding of data. They regularly visit the school and are increasingly involved in looking at pupils' learning. This is giving them a better understanding of how to challenge you and senior leaders. They have introduced a governor of the month scheme, who visits the school and reports back on what they have observed. They are developing procedures to help them evaluate their findings and are having a greater involvement in the direction of the school, through action planning. Although governors check that leaders are addressing school improvement priorities they do not meet regularly enough to fully hold you and senior leaders to account for your actions.

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:

- develop the school improvement plan to include planned actions beyond July 2013
- improve the monitoring and evaluation procedures to make sure teachers are held accountable for the progress of pupils in their class
- attend Ofsted school improvement seminars with a focus on English and mathematics
- rigorously challenge teachers to improve their teaching through the implementation of support programmes
- ensure subject leaders have the opportunity to observe good practice from effective leaders in other schools
- increase the monitoring by the governing body to ensure leaders are on track to improve the school.

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

External support

The local authority is reviewing the work of the school. Officers from the local authority are reviewing the school's performance as well as providing support to secure improvement. The Early Years Foundation Stage is receiving support from the local authority and literacy and numeracy consultants are supporting teachers to improve the quality of teaching. The local authority facilitated a partnership between the school and a Local Leader of Education.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Millward
Her Majesty's Inspector