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Mr C Lewis
Water Orton Primary School
Attleboro Lane
Water Orton
Birmingham
B46 1SB

Dear Mr Lewis

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

Following my visit to your school on 13 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, one of your deputy headteachers, the Chair and members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I evaluated the school improvement plan and reviewed a range of documentation including: pupil progress information; class teachers' planning using pupil progress information; minutes from the governing body meetings including those of the teaching and performance subcommittee; the school's monitoring programme and lesson observation notes and feedback. You and I also walked around the school together and spoke to pupils.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the recent inspection which judged the school to require improvement.

Main findings

Since the inspection you have recognised the need for greater consistency in all you do. This has been reflected in the tightening up of your monitoring and evaluation of teaching. Your programme to monitor teaching is linked more closely to improvement plans. You have rewritten the school's development plan to align it with the priorities identified in the inspection report and shared it with staff. It does not always identify measurable outcomes and there are not enough milestones to enable you to measure your progress. You have also missed the opportunity to link the management of staff performance to the targets in the school development plan.

Staff have a better understanding of what the school needs to do to improve and the part they play in this because they annotate the school development plan and can see the impact of their work.

Information on pupils' progress is collected and analysed more frequently. Class teachers have more accurate information about their pupils' starting points and are using this to ensure that work is better matched to individual needs. Teaching assistants are deployed more effectively because teachers are expected to share lesson planning with them. In addition, teaching assistants now have professional development. As a result of their training, they are beginning to monitor the progress made by pupils in their groups.

You have redefined the roles and responsibilities of the deputy headteachers to enable them to coach and mentor staff. Their work is improving the quality of teaching. Teachers have begun to observe each other and plan together. The reorganisation of class groups has helped this process. Staff meetings are used to share good practice and as a forum for training. Teachers' marking and their assessment of pupils' work are more rigorous, partly as a result of staff moderating pupils' work both within the local cluster of schools and across the school. Consequently, they have a more accurate view of the national curriculum levels.

You have introduced a range of 'non-negotiables' for all classes which are helping to improve the consistency of the teaching of writing and mathematics. Teachers have improved the quality of classroom displays so that they support and develop pupils' literacy and writing. However, your teachers have missed opportunities to extend the displays to include mathematical language and so support those pupils who find it difficult to talk about their learning in mathematics.

Governors are better informed and more able to challenge you; consequently, they have a more accurate picture of how well the school is doing. However, the minutes of governors' meetings do not sufficiently record how and when they have challenged you and what actions then follow. Governors have a better understanding

of their roles, especially the purpose of the subcommittees. Link governors come into school more frequently.

Senior leaders and governors are taking 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 that the school development plan has milestones and measurable outcomes to help you judge whether you are making progress or not and link the targets in the school development plan to all staff performance management targets
- ensure that the minutes of the governing body clearly explain how governors are challenging senior leaders and show the actions that follow as a consequence of their challenge.

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

External support

The local authority has appropriately linked your school with a local leader in education in order to help its continued improvement. The local authority adviser meets with you regularly to discuss the progress the school is making and to moderate your judgments. This support is helping to ensure that your view of the school's improvement is accurate.

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

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker

Her Majesty's Inspector