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13 May 2013

Mrs Louise Ward
Headteacher
Bell Lane Primary (J and I) School
Bell Lane
Ackworth
Pontefract
West Yorkshire
WF7 7JH

Dear Mrs Ward

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit to Bell Lane Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 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 March. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit I held meetings with you and your leadership team, with two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school's 'Post Ofsted Action Plan' was evaluated as well as other documents related to the work of the school. You kindly took me on a tour of the school.

Since the inspection there have been no changes in staff although one teacher will be leaving at the end of the year and a newly qualified teacher will be starting in September.

Main findings

You had already identified the issues and priorities found at the March inspection and consequently all leaders, governors and the local authority endorse the judgments and areas for improvement found by the inspectors.

Since the inspection subject leaders have been brought together into teams to develop their leadership skills further. The subject leader for mathematics has received training from the local authority. Following an audit of teachers' questioning skills, all teachers have engaged with training to improve the questions they ask and develop pupils' thinking and reasoning in lessons. Some teachers have been partnered with more experienced colleagues to share effective practice. Although leaders are monitoring this work, they are not yet able to quantify the difference it is making. Leaders agree that the criteria and milestones in the school's action plan need to be sharper and more precise to enable them to measure the school's improvement and accelerate their progress to 'good'.

The school is continuing to work with another local school and a local leader of education to ensure that the feedback given to pupils helps them to improve the progress they make.

The governing body have reviewed the roles of governors and are continuing the newly established system of ensuring middle leaders report to governors about the progress the school is making in bringing about improvements. Governors are clear that the emphasis needs to be on the impact leaders are having and accept that sharpening this aspect of improvement planning will build on the sense of ambition and determination shown by leaders.

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:

- sharpen the school's action plans to include more detailed information from monitoring of the schools work and clearer links between actions and their intended impact with precise, measurable criteria and milestones.

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

External support

The local authority officer has worked with school leaders in checking and developing the quality of teachers' questioning. It has brokered a package of assistance for 'securing good', which has focused on developing leaders skills in mathematics and English. The school is continuing to work with a local 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 Wakefield and as below.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Guy

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority - (including where a school is an academy)
- the academy chain where relevant
- Diocese - for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.