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Jo Evans
Headteacher
Burnt Tree Primary School
Hill Road
Tividale
Oldbury
B69 2LN

Dear Ms Evans

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Burnt Tree Primary School.

Following my visit to your school on 15 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 on 17 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this visit, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher, four members of the governing body. The school's improvement plan was evaluated. Five parts of lessons were observed across the school.

Context

There have been no significant changes to the school since the previous inspection in January 2013.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection you have responded well to the areas for improvement. You have:

- provided training for all staff on the teaching of early reading
- commissioned an external review of governance
- made sure that governors are more proficient in asking the right questions and have a better understanding of the information provided on pupils' progress
- written a well-focused action plan concentrating on what needs most improvement
- provided training for those teachers with extra responsibilities to carry out their leadership roles more effectively.

Through your regular checks on the quality of teachers' work, you know that there is a good deal of work to do to improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

There are effective systems to keep a check on pupils' learning and progress in lessons and in their books. However, there is not a system in place to check on the development of specific language skills for those pupils who speak English as an additional language or who are advanced bi-lingual learners and this restricts their progress.

You have improved the teaching of early reading skills (phonics) consequently pupils are making much better progress than in 2012. Teachers are getting better at using other reading sessions to develop pupils' wider reading skills. Groups of pupils working closely with an adult are adequately led and help pupils to read, both for enjoyment and meaning. However, those groups of pupils working on their own are not set work at the correct level and this slows their progress.

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:

- provide appropriate help and guidance to teachers so that they are better able to meet the particular needs of those pupils who speak English as an additional language
- improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by making links with other schools to give teachers the opportunity to observe effective practice
- make sure that the tasks set for pupils in group reading sessions enable them to make rapid gains in their learning.

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

External support

There is a good balance of support and challenge provided by the local authority and the local leader of education working in partnership with the school.

Good quality training has been provided for governors. This has improved their ability to ask challenging questions.

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

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth
Her Majesty's Inspector