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Ms Rachel Cutting
Headteacher
Olive Hill Primary School
Springfield Road
Halesowen
B62 8JZ

Dear Ms Cutting

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Olive Hill Primary School, Dudley local authority.

Following my visit to your school on 22 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, members of the governing body including the Chair, pupils and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated as were other documents including tracking information on pupil achievement.

Context

The Key Stage 1 coordinator is on maternity leave and the school has a vacancy for a writing coordinator.

Main findings

Senior leaders know where strengths and weaknesses are in teaching. Where weaknesses remain in teaching a programme of support has been put in place. In order to improve teaching senior leaders have arranged peer observations and visits to neighbouring schools.

The quality of teaching and marking is checked regularly by senior leaders. Not all phase leaders and subject coordinators are involved in this yet because of the variable quality of middle leadership. Consequently, some of the work of the middle leaders is still carried out by the senior leaders.

There has been a steady increase in attendance as a range of measures put in place by the school are taking effect. These include letters home, telephone calls on the first day of absence, attendance clinics and the removal of privileges. There has also been a fall in persistent absence. Punctuality is being tackled through a new system that requires parents of latecomers to sign in when they arrive at school. Local headteachers have all agreed a common strategy to not authorise term holidays in term time from next year.

Although older pupils have not made enough progress in writing throughout Key Stage 2, they have made rapid gains in recent months. Progress remains slower in Years 3 and 4. This is linked to the quality of teaching. Additional tutoring has been provided for more able older pupils. Some younger pupils in Key Stage 2 feel that at times work is still too easy where the same task is set for everyone.

Senior leaders are formally tracking pupil progress every six weeks to ensure no individual or group fall behind. Half termly pupil progress meetings are in place and in the case of Years 3 and 4, fortnightly meetings, where challenging targets for pupils are set and reviewed.

Leaders are seeking to improve the consistency of marking through regular checking of books and discussions with pupils. Where marking requires improvement additional support has been provided.

Governors are better informed to ask challenging questions. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have facts and figures at their fingertips which enable them to check whether the school is making progress against clearly set out milestones. The very good action plan sets out clearly what the school needs to do. A school improvement committee has been set up to scrutinise the work of senior leaders. Link governors are in place for Key Stage 1 and 2 and protocols have been put in place for governors to record the purpose and outcomes of their visits to the school.

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 make sure:

- remaining weaknesses in teaching are quickly removed so that work set for pupils is always at the right level
- pupils' progress in English and mathematics is at least good in all year groups in Key Stage 2
- middle leaders are fully equipped to carry out their roles in monitoring teaching, learning and progress.

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

External support

The local authority has supported the school through regular monitoring visits and through a literacy consultant supporting the school with writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector