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Mr Garry Ratcliffe
Executive Headteacher
Temple Hill Community Primary and Nursery School
St Edmund's Road
Dartford
Kent
DA1 5ND

Dear Mr Ratcliffe

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Temple Hill Community Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 21 May 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, a group of pupils, four members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. We discussed the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated and records of the monitoring of teaching were checked.

Context

The governing body is consulting with parents on plans for the school to federate with Oakfield Community Primary School under a single governing body.

Main findings

The leadership structure of the school has been refined and each member of the senior team has a clear role in driving school improvement. Two experienced teachers have been appointed to lead developments in English and mathematics from September and this will further strengthen the capacity of the leadership team. School leaders have raised expectations of what staff and pupils can achieve and this new vision and ambition for the school is communicated clearly to all.

The executive headteacher and head of school have revised the school improvement plan for the current academic year so that it includes actions to tackle the areas of weakness that were identified by the inspection team. A structured programme of staff training has helped to teachers to develop their skills in marking work and setting targets for pupils. School leaders have already made follow-up visits to classrooms to see how teachers are implementing new policies.

Governors do not visit classes often enough to see the school at work and check progress for themselves. They rely too heavily on the information provided by senior leaders. The executive headteacher provides regular reports to the governing body on pupils' progress, but information about the quality of teaching is not detailed enough and does not include evaluations of work in pupils' books or teachers' planning. The current school development plan does not have short- or long-term measurable targets for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This makes it difficult for the governing body to judge how successful school leaders have been in improving teaching and raising standards.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- sharpen the school improvement plan by including clear short-term and long-term targets for improvement
- ensure that governors visit the school regularly to check the progress of key actions for themselves
- collate the information gathered from the monitoring of teaching and learning to provide a full overview of each teacher's strengths and areas for development.

Ofsted will provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. HMI will support training for the governing body in monitoring the work of the school in the autumn term.

External support

The school makes very effective use of its close links with Oakfield Community Primary School. Teachers have frequent opportunities to work with colleagues at Oakfield and this has helped to spread good practice.

An officer from the local authority visits the school regularly to review pupils' progress with the senior team. The local authority has also provided funding for collaborative work with local schools and for specific projects aimed at raising achievement. Funding to support the introduction of a structured scheme for teaching letter sounds and spelling has had a significant impact on pupils' progress this year.

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

Yours sincerely

Melanie Knowles

Her Majesty's Inspector