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6 June 2013

Martin Smith
Headteacher
Pixies Hill Primary School
Hazeldell Road,
Hemel Hempstead
HP1 2BY

Dear Mr Smith

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Pixies Hill Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 June, 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 the headteacher, other senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. A tour of the school was undertaken and the action plan was evaluated.

Context

There have been no changes to the staffing since the previous inspection. There is currently one remaining vacancy on the governing body.

Main findings

The post-inspection action plan shows appropriately how the school's leaders aim to improve the quality of teaching and increase rates of pupil achievement in English and mathematics. It identifies responsibilities clearly and includes tight timescales for

improvement. Targets link closely to pupil performance so leaders are able to measure effectively the school's progress towards addressing the key issues highlighted at the last inspection.

There is a sharp focus on improving the quality of provision across the school. Analysis of pupil progress data demonstrates that the rate of pupil achievement is accelerating in all classes. Scrutiny of pupils' writing in Year 6 confirms that previous gaps in achievement have diminished and more-able pupils are writing with purpose and at greater length. The high-quality marking of their work provides effective guidance to them about what they need to do next to improve. However, the school's own monitoring has identified that not all marking is of this high standard in other classes and is an area for further improvement.

Governors demonstrate greater awareness of data about pupil achievement and now make good use of it to monitor the school's effectiveness. Regular visits to school and attendance at pupil progress meetings provide them with the necessary information to ask challenging questions of senior leaders about school performance.

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, Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that further action is taken to:

- ensure that school leaders and governors continue to make effective use of regular and specific monitoring to eliminate any remaining inconsistencies in teaching and pupils' learning across the school.

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

External support

The local authority provides regular support, guidance and training to staff and governors. Local authority improvement officers maintain a close overview of the school to ensure that it quickly tackles the key issues from the inspection to secure the necessary improvements in pupils' outcomes.

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

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector