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11 June 2013

Mr J Bless
Headteacher
Prince of Wales Primary School
Salisbury Road
Enfield
EN3 6HG

Dear Mr Bless

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Prince of Wales Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 11 June 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior and middle leaders, some support staff, members of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I observed the school's work during a learning walk and we jointly observed one lesson. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including action plans, monitoring and pupil achievement data and samples of pupils' work.

Context

Since my last visit, one teacher has returned from maternity leave, but there have been no significant changes to the context of the school. However, a number of staff changes are planned for the autumn as a result of staff resignations and the re-structuring of the senior management team.

Main findings

There is clear evidence that you are continuing to take effective action to address the points for improvement identified in the section 5 inspection report. Although you rightly recognise that there is still more to do to ensure that these improvements are fully embedded, the school is on the right track.

Evidence from my scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment data and internal and external monitoring records indicate that the quality of teaching is steadily improving across the school. This is because you have provided very well-focused training and support to help teachers and teaching assistants develop their skills, for example in the use of questioning to challenge pupils and extend their learning. Although this training has been effective, you rightly recognise that in some classes teaching remains fragile and the challenge is to ensure that recent improvements are securely embedded and sustained. For example, your evidence indicates that there remains some weaker teaching. Where teaching is weaker this is often because teachers are not responding to the emerging needs of pupils in lessons quickly enough.

Improvements in teaching are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement, especially in reading, speaking and listening and mathematics. In writing, pupils' achievement is more variable, especially in Years 4 and 5 where pupils have made slower progress than they should. However, in Years 2 and 6 pupils' have caught up in reading, writing and mathematics and they are on track to achieve nationally expected levels, or better, often from very low starting points.

The strong focus on reading, speaking and listening is having a good impact on pupils' achievement and their attitudes towards learning. For example, the pupils who I met were very enthusiastic and could speak with clarity and confidence about what they were reading. The additional support that you have put into addressing past weaknesses in phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) and early reading is making sure that pupils' literacy skills are improving well.

Marking in pupils' books now provides clear and helpful guidance on how they can improve their work. A strength in teaching is the way in which pupils are regularly encouraged to assess their own progress against clear success criteria because this is helping them to take responsibility for their learning. Those pupils that I spoke to had a clear understanding of what their targets were in writing and mathematics and knew what level they were working within, which is helping them to understand what they need to do to improve their work

Although attendance remains just below the national average, it has improved recently. Effective behaviour policies continue to be consistently applied. As a result

all pupils, particularly those who find behaving well a challenge, are well-supported. The pupils I spoke to felt that behaviour had improved.

Middle leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their areas of responsibility. Their involvement in undertaking joint lesson observations in year groups where they are less familiar has supported them in developing this.

The school decided to restructure the senior leadership team and plans are at an advanced stage. Because they clarify roles and responsibilities these have the potential to drive improvement more rapidly and increase the rigour with which teaching is monitored. They should lead to a more strategic approach towards school improvement. Governors are effectively holding the school to account, for example by challenging the leadership to demonstrate that resources spent on the professional development of staff represent good value for money. They have also introduced performance targets for teaching assistants, as well as teachers, and this is also helping to raise standards of teaching and learning.

You are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. However, I recommend that you should take further action to:

- ensure that planned changes in leadership are rapidly embedded in the autumn so that any residual weaknesses in teaching are eliminated
- ensure that pupils' achievement in writing improves more rapidly, especially with those pupils currently in Years 4 and 5.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has continued to provide wide-ranging and good quality support which matches the school's needs and is helping you to address weaknesses. As well as providing direct support, for example in training middle leaders, they have also undertaken detailed and helpful reviews of the school's progress and brokered good quality external training for teachers and support staff.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Nye
Her Majesty's Inspector