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12 June 2013

Mr P Mathews
Headteacher
Norbury Manor Primary School
Abingdon Road
London
SW16 5QR

Dear Mr Mathews

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Norbury Manor Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 12 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 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, I met with you, other staff, including the curriculum leaders for mathematics and English, the Chair of the Governing Body and a parent governor. I also met a representative from the local authority. We visited five lessons together and scrutinised samples of pupils' work. I evaluated the school's post-Ofsted action plan and looked at a range of other documentation, including the new marking policy and the school's data on pupils' progress.

Context

One teacher has left the school since the inspection.

Main findings

You and your team have responded quickly and effectively to tackle a number of the areas for improvement identified by inspectors. Actions to improve the quality of marking are working and teachers' now identify much more clearly what pupils need to do to improve their work. Teachers now routinely expect pupils to take action to correct mistakes or improve their work in literacy and increasingly in other subjects. All the pupils I spoke with could explain how marking has changed and how it is now helping them to make better progress. Plans are in place to trial and then roll out similar strategies in mathematics.

Teachers have drastically reduced their use of printed worksheets in lessons. This is helping to increase the level of challenge and opportunities to develop pupils' enquiry and independent learning skills. The exemplar materials produced to support good teaching highlight effective approaches and the expected standard of written feedback. The newly appointed science subject leader has undertaken an effective audit of provision in science and is already identifying ways to strengthen pupils enquiry skills through the science curriculum.

The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is more rigorous and you have tackled the weakest teaching robustly. Plans are in place to strengthen the analysis of teaching and learning over time through scrutiny of a wider range of evidence. You and your staff are working to improve the lesson observation forms to ensure that lesson evaluations are informed by analysis of the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. Current observation forms focus too much on what the teachers are doing in lessons rather than how well pupils are achieving. The phase leaders value the increased opportunities to work together, for example through sharing the findings of book scrutinies, because it improves consistency and raises their confidence in setting high expectations. Teachers also value the way in which joint working, for example through peered lesson observations, is more sharply linked to their individual professional development needs.

Pupils continue to benefit from small group teaching and interventions led by qualified teachers. The pupil progress meetings play an important role in identifying which pupils need additional help. However, these meetings do not result in sharp enough targets – linked to expected gains in pupils' achievement – to drive rapid improvement and enable you to know which strategies are the most effective. You recognise that opportunities are missed to help the parents of pupils who are falling behind to play their part in speeding up their child's learning.

These improvements are having a growing impact on raising attainment and you judge that results in this year's National Curriculum Key Stage 2 assessments will be better than last year. However, you also know that pupils' progress is still variable, and it is weaker in Year 3 and Year 4. While the school's post-Ofsted action plan sets the ambition that all teaching must be good or better, the planned timescales are not quick enough to eliminate previous underachievement. It is essential that all

teaching quickly becomes good so that the improvements seen in pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1 are not wasted in Key Stage 2.

Staff report that the governing body has raised its profile since the inspection. Governor links to the different phases have become more established and governors have a much clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. An independent audit of governance has been completed and will shortly be followed up with an action plan, with support from a Local Leader of Education. The Chair of the Governing Body, appointed in January 2013, has quickly won the support and confidence of teachers and is proving to be increasingly effective in holding governors to account and ensuring they carry out their duties effectively.

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:

- speed up improvements to the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teaching is consistently good by the end of November 2013 at the latest
- accelerate progress for pupils currently in Years 3 and 4
- ensure lesson observations focus sharply on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress rather than on the teaching itself
- ensure strategies to help pupils who have fallen behind catch up are underpinned by clear, measurable and challenging success criteria so that staff can be sure that they are working well.

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 school continues to benefit from appropriate support from the local authority. This has included support in strengthening the post-Ofsted action plan together with termly review meetings to assess the school's progress against the areas in need of improvement. A full review of teaching and learning is planned for the Autumn term and I have asked that the findings of this – and the recent termly review are shared with Ofsted – to inform future monitoring activity.

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

Yours sincerely

Daniel Burton
Her Majesty's Inspector