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Ms Helen Wallace
Headteacher
Chawson First School
Wych Road
Droitwich
WR9 8BW

Dear Mrs Wallace

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Chawson First School

Following my visit to your school on 21 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, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The Chair of the governing body was not available. The school improvement plan was evaluated as well as other documents including tracking information on pupil achievement.

Context

The school is currently recruiting for a new special educational needs coordinator to start in September 2013.

Main findings

Senior leaders have worked tirelessly to improve the quality of teaching despite the large turnover of staff. Following monitoring by you and the deputy headteacher, the school's own analysis suggests the proportion of teaching that is consistently good has risen. You and your deputy headteacher have a detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. There have been rapid improvements in the quality and consistency of marking which pupils have seen. Where teaching still requires improvement teachers receive tailored support and training. In addition you both hold regular pupil progress meetings where pupil progress data is analysed in detail and teachers are held to account. All of this has been mainly driven by you and the deputy headteacher and to date other senior and middle leaders have not been as involved in monitoring teaching and pupil achievement. The teaching and support of other adults including teaching assistants are not monitored with the same scrutiny as that of teachers.

The school has sought to improve the quality of writing. This has been a focus of whole school training with the local authority and the school has worked closely in partnership with the local middle school. The curriculum has been adjusted to provide pupils in Key Stage 2 regular opportunities for extended writing. Writing tasks are linked to other aspects of the curriculum such as the Tudors in history and South Africa in geography and history and give pupils a real purpose for writing. They are rightly proud of their work as seen by their enthusiasm in showing off their work on their way to a celebration assembly. Consequently the school has seen a rapid acceleration in pupil progress in the second half of this academic year as you have sought successfully to raise pupils' and teachers' expectations.

Governors are supportive of the work of the school. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are well informed by senior leaders and a sub-committee analyses achievement data in depth. The raising achievement plan is discussed at each governing body meeting although there are insufficient milestones for them to evaluate how on track pupils are to meet their targets. Governors are not sufficiently clear about the link between pay and teacher 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, HMI recommend that further action is taken to make sure:

- other senior and middle leaders take on greater responsibility in monitoring teaching and tracking the achievement of pupils
- ensure the work of additional adults including teaching assistants is monitored with the same rigour as that of teachers
- identify milestones on the raising achievement plan so that those monitoring and evaluating the plan can see at an early stage whether the school is on track to meet its targets.

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 been active in a short space of time in providing significant support and challenge to you, as well as to teachers, through additional literacy support and training. Plans are in place to extend this support further in September 2013. As yet the local authority has not begun to work with other senior and middle leaders or the governing body.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector