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12 June 2013

Mr D O'Brien
Headteacher
Ripley CofE Primary School
Wentworth Close
Ripley
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GU23 6ED

Dear Mr O'Brien

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ripley CofE 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 April 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, your curriculum leader, four members of the governing body including the Chair of Governors, a group of pupils and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement action plan was evaluated. A range of documents were scrutinised including some governing body minutes, reports from local authority officers and samples of pupils' work.

Context

The school has made a number of new appointments. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed and will take up post in September 2013. Another new teacher is due to take up post in September 2013. One teacher is due to begin maternity

leave at the end of this academic year and one teacher is leaving at the end of July. A new school business manager has been appointed to take up the post at the end of June 2013.

Main findings

The judgements made at the inspection were accepted by yourself and members of the governing body. You quickly focused on the most important areas identified for improvement in the inspection report and devised a new school improvement/post-Ofsted action plan to set out how the school plans to address the areas for development. Although the plan is fit for purpose and includes milestones to check on its progress, it requires some further amendments to sharpen it. At present the milestones are not closely linked to each priority. They do not set out what different groups of pupils are expected to achieve at key points during the year. In addition, it is unclear how the impact of the actions will be measured.

There has been an increased focus on ensuring teachers provide clear feedback to pupils on how to improve their work. Although pupils say they are given more time to consider and act on the feedback teachers provide in marking, inconsistencies remain. Not all marking effectively guides pupils on what they need to do to improve their work. There are few examples of pupils responding to marking comments and showing improvements. In our discussion, you recognised there is more to be done to achieve consistently high quality marking in books.

During our discussions it was evident that you and your governors are working to achieve greater consistency in all aspects of the school's work. It is clear that you have high expectations for all pupils to make at least good progress. Your curriculum leader has successfully mapped out the progression of pupils' skills across the range of subjects. This is a useful aid to teachers when they plan their lessons. The challenge now is to ensure that all teachers and teaching assistants have equally high expectations to enable all groups of pupils to make consistently good progress in lessons.

Governors are knowledgeable about the work of the school and continue to hold the school to account well. They are using their own expertise to support the school. Together with members of the governing body, you have appointed key staff to strengthen the leadership of the school. A monitoring plan has been devised to enable leaders and governors to regularly check on whether planned improvements are evident. It is vitally important that all monitoring activities, including lesson observations, now focus on evaluating the quality of learning for all groups of pupils'.

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:

- make sure targets in the school development plan are focused on pupil outcomes and are measurable at several points during the year to check that pupils are making better progress
- make sure that senior leaders evaluate the quality of pupils' learning, first and foremost, including the learning of different groups, in their monitoring activities and when observing lessons and judging the quality of teaching.

In addition, following the amendments:

- send the modified school improvement plan to me by the end of July.

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 supporting the school well in recent years and prior to the inspection a review was carried out to determine the school's priorities. The leadership partner assisted the school in appointing the deputy headteacher and has helped to increase the capacity of leadership within the school. The English and mathematics subject leaders have also received effective support to increase their subject leadership skills. The leadership partner also provided useful advice on how to improve the school's strategic plan and set up systems to monitor the quality of teaching and hold members of staff to account. This support has been well received by the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter will be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body
- Director of Children's Services for Surrey
- Diocese of Guildford