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Faye Ewen
Headteacher
Yewtree Primary School
Fletcher Road
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP25QR

Dear Miss Ewen

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Yewtree Primary

Following my visit to your school on 18 June 2013, 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 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school action plan was evaluated alongside a range of other self-evaluation and monitoring documents. Observations were made of teachers working with pupils in the classrooms and a discussion was held with pupils in the school council.

Context

There have been no significant changes to staffing since the previous inspection but there will be several teachers leaving at the end of this term and number of new teachers starting at the beginning of the next academic year. There are currently four vacancies on the governing body.

Main findings

A precise action plan shows clearly how the school's leaders are tackling the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report. For example, it identifies how they are using training to improve teachers' skills and expertise. The plan identifies who is responsible for driving improvement in each priority and so provides clear lines of accountability. At the beginning of the plan there is information about the targets set for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. However, there is little reference to these targets within the rest of the plan to support rapid improvement in English and mathematics and robust performance management.

The headteacher monitors teaching and learning regularly throughout the school against the Teachers Standards. Inspection evidence and discussions with pupils confirms that this is leading to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. The quality of marking continues to improve. Teachers' comments provide pupils with clear guidance on what they need to do next to improve. Teachers provide appropriate time for pupils to respond to these comments in lessons. Pupils say that this is helping them to make better progress.

The local authority has undertaken a thorough review of school governance. Governors are now more actively involved in monitoring the school's work. Meetings with subject leaders and joint observations of lessons with the headteacher provide them with better insight into the school's strengths and where further improvement is required. Leaders are using effectively government funding for pupils eligible to free school meals and so gaps in achievement are narrowing. The governing body demonstrates a better understanding of how effective performance management can support rapid school improvement.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take 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 reference is made to attainment targets in English and mathematics within the action plan to raise standards further
- undertake another monitoring visit to review the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

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

External support

The local authority provides regular focused support and guidance to the headteacher, 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 and secures 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

Phillip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector