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20 June 2013

Ms Aileen Birrell
Headteacher
Hilton Lane Primary School
Madam's Wood Road
Little Hulton
Worsley
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Lancashire
M28 0JY

Dear Ms Birrell

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hilton Lane Primary School, Salford

Following my visit to your school on 19 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 April 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders and those in charge of subjects and representatives of the governing body and of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school's action plan was evaluated. Some brief visits to lessons were undertaken and a small sample of pupils' work was considered. A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's records of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and the impact of performance management.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the last inspection that judged the school to require improvement.

Main findings

The school's action plan for tackling the areas for improvement from the last inspection is very sharply focused on actions that need to be taken to speed up the improvement of pupils' achievement. The plan demonstrates clear capacity to ensure that the school improves quickly enough to become good by the time of the next S5 inspection in eighteen months to two years. However the plan should be further adapted to focus even more explicitly on those pupil groups that previously under-achieved.

The headteacher has a very clear sense of direction for the school, shared with senior leaders and those in charge of subjects. Together they have put in place robust arrangements for checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and for performance management. As a result, the school's interventions to improve achievement show early signs of impact. For example, the school's current assessment information indicates a much faster pace of learning in mathematics by pupils taught in small groups in Years 5 and 6, compared to the same period last year.

Those teachers in charge of subjects show good capacity to improve the school further. They are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and well-linked to local networks, such as 'school families' for maintaining their skills. However the school knows that there is not yet enough consistently good and outstanding teaching. There is some inconsistency in the quality of marking and feedback to pupils and staff are at different stages of development in the precise use of assessment information to set pupils, especially the most able, challenging targets. Feedback to teachers on their teaching is generally clear and linked to the Teaching Standards, but not always to appropriate professional development.

Governors are experienced and highly committed to the school's improvement but in the past they have not always had enough information to challenge the school as vigorously as they could. They now have better knowledge of the use of assessment information and are beginning to ask increasingly more challenging questions of the school. Further training is in hand to help them quickly become as independent and proactive as is their goal.

The pupil premium funding (additional funding allocated for students known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority, or members of service families) is wisely spent. Its impact is seen in the fact that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieve at least as well as other pupils in the school.

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:

- further strengthen its action plan to ensure an even sharper focus on previously underachieving groups of pupils and individuals.
- ensure teachers and teaching assistants have enough opportunities to plan together and share across key stages the good practice already present in the school and across schools that have become good and outstanding.
- ensure that all teachers consistently give clear and helpful feedback to pupils and check regularly that their guidance is followed up by pupils.
- intensify training and support for subject leaders in holding underperforming teachers to account.

- continue to work with the local authority to ensure the school improves and provides a good education for all its pupils before the next full inspection in around 18 months' time
- undertake a review of the governing body as soon as possible to ensure that all governors can discharge their responsibilities in holding the school to account as effectively as possible.
- continue to work with the local authority to ensure the school improves and provides a good education for all its pupils before the next full inspection in around 18 months' time.

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 previously given light touch support to the school. Since the last inspection the local authority has been quick to provide extensive, well - structured support, for example specialist advice in mathematics in Years 5 and 6. This has led to faster progress for these pupils. The local authority has plans in hand to provide more opportunities for groups of teachers to see good practice in action in its good and outstanding schools. The school also draws on other independent consultancy for the improvement of teaching and learning and this is contributing to a higher proportion of good teaching in the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Wareing

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority - including where the school is an academy
- the academy chain where relevant
- Diocese - for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.