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15 July 2013

Mr Malcolm Morrey
Headteacher
Salisbury Primary School
Salisbury Street
Wednesbury
WS10 8BQ

Dear Mr Morrey

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Salisbury Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 15 July 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, five middle leaders, the Chair and two members of the Governing Body. I also met with a representative of the local authority and eight pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed, including middle leaders' action plans, parent and pupil questionnaires and information about pupils' progress. I also visited classrooms with you and the deputy headteacher, to review learning activities and to talk to pupils about their learning.

Context

The governing body have merged with the governing body of a local primary school as a result of a formal federation.

Main findings

The actions in the school development plan clearly indicate how the quality of teaching and leadership and management will be strengthened in the short term in order to raise pupils' achievements. However, the action plan does not identify measurable targets and dates when these targets will be achieved. In addition, the action plan does not indicate what actions are to be taken after September 2013.

Leaders are seeking to improve the quality of teachers' marking through regular checking of books and discussions with pupils. However, the impact of this work is limited as highlighted by the work scrutiny I carried out which found that there is a lack of consistency across classes in how marking helps pupils improve their work.

Governors meet regularly to discuss the progress of pupils. However, the information they receive from you and other leaders does not enable them to ask searching questions about the progress of different groups of pupils and to check that senior leaders are helping all pupils make better progress.

Childrens' progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is improving. During visits to classrooms I saw pupils engaged in planned, purposeful play. The school leader who has responsibility for this stage is taking firm leadership especially in how teachers provide challenge and extend the pupils' current learning.

The end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments for 2013 show that overall attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has improved from 2012. However, not all pupils make expected progress in writing and mathematics.

The end of Key Stage 2 test results for 2013 show that overall attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has improved from 2012. However, there is still a gap between the achievement in reading and mathematics of pupils who receive the pupil premium grant (additional government funding) and those that do not.

As a result of a range of measures including letters home, telephone calls on the first day of absence and home visits there has been a steady improvement in pupils' attendance. Despite these recent improvements, attendance remains low and below national figures.

Since the recent inspection you, and other school leaders, have introduced strategies that are used by teachers to improve their teaching. One such strategy is 'Talk Boost' which ensures pupils talk about their thoughts and ideas before they commit them to paper. These initiatives are in the early stages of development. This was confirmed during my visits to classrooms.

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 ensure:

- the school action plan has specific targets which link more closely to pupils' progress and attainment and includes longer term targets and milestones so that progress can be more accurately measured
- consistency in the quality of marking across the school so that pupils are better able to improve the quality of their work
- the governors are presented with concise information about individual and groups of pupils' progress so that they are able to ask challenging questions
- activities given to pupils in lessons are better matched to their needs in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and in reading and mathematics at Key Stage 2
- pupils' attendance is improved to be in line with national figures.

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

You are making good use of the support that has been offered or brokered by the local authority. Staff say they are benefitting from the training on improving questioning. Good practice in questioning was observed during the visit. There is further scope for training to develop the role of middle leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Humphries
Her Majesty's Inspector