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Grace Bradford
Coundon Primary School
Forfield Road
Coundon
Coventry
CV6 1FQ

Dear Mrs Bradford

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Coundon Primary School

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

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the acting deputy-headteacher, and two members of the Governing Body including the Chair. I also toured the school with you and visited all classes while pupils were in lessons. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Discussions were also held with the Senior Adviser and Education Improvement Adviser (EIA) responsible for the school. In addition, I attended a School Improvement Board (SIB) meeting and a meeting for parents organised by the Governing Body to discuss the school's improvement plans.

Context

The headteacher continues to be absent from school. One teacher is currently taking maternity leave and one teacher has recently returned from maternity leave. One teacher's contract has been extended to full time and an additional part time teacher has been recruited to the staff from September 2013. Two parent and two staff governors have been appointed to governing body.

Main findings

You and your deputy headteacher have responded to the inspection findings with suitable urgency. The training day in June 2013 helped increase staff understanding of what constitutes good teaching and learning, clarified performance management expectations and clarified how leaders will support staff to improve their practice. Completed evaluations were extremely positive. A number of documents have been reviewed such as the teaching and learning and monitoring and evaluation policies. These are ready for implementation in September 2013. You have successfully restructured the school's management team to involve them more in the leadership and management of the school. You have reorganised the class structure by pairing good and outstanding teachers with those requiring improvement. Building work is due to start at the school in September 2013. It is imperative that this does not adversely affect teaching and learning and pupils' progress during this period. The impact of all of this work requires monitoring and evaluating during the autumn term.

The action plan 'Moving Coundon Forward' was completed with support from the local authority and has been shared with all staff and governors. It is fit for purpose. There is a strong emphasis on addressing the areas for improvement identified at the recent inspection. The plan includes appropriate actions, timescales and intentions. The unvalidated national test results for 2013 show that pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 pupils' was similar to that found nationally in reading and mathematics at the expected level. It was below in writing. This picture was mirrored in Year 2. At the end of both Key Stages too few pupils attained the higher levels. You have responded to this by affiliating to a national organisation for gifted and talented pupils, auditing the provision for the most able and revising school policies to ensure all staff meet their specific needs. You have shared this information with the governors at the recent SIB meeting.

The governing body responded positively to the inspection findings. An audit of governance has been undertaken by a National Leader of Governance and a full governing body review is scheduled for later in July 2013. Governors are increasing their undertaking of data following a recent input by your deputy headteacher but they recognise more work is required to increase their understanding. The Governing Body invited all parents and carers to a meeting to discuss the school's priorities for action. Parents and carers were able to submit questions prior to the evening and over 36 families attended the event. Most were supportive of the school but some expressed concerns about the variability of teaching, homework and the proposed building. Questions were answered to most parents' satisfaction. Governors are increasing their understanding of how pupil premium funding is spent but are yet to appreciate what impact this is having on pupils' outcomes.

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:

- improve achievement for higher attaining pupils and in writing across the school
- evaluate the impact of recently introduced strategies for teaching and learning and report your findings to the staff and Governing Body
- ensure that the building work programme is managed effectively so that it does not adversely affect the progress of pupils
- undertake a review of the Governing Body and address the resultant findings.

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 EIA has worked with you and your deputy headteacher to coordinate a range of useful support for staff. This is helping to strengthen leadership but is too soon to demonstrate an impact on teaching and learning. The local authority has linked you with a local leader of education in order to help the school continue improving. You have benefitted from regular communication and visits. You have explored different approaches to teaching learning such as observing and discussing the strengths of the marking policy from Eastern Green Primary School. Partnerships are at an early stage of development with a number of local schools in the network. These have the potential to provide teachers with regular opportunities to observe good practice but have yet to be established.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston
Her Majesty's Inspector