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Mrs Susan Harris
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Harris

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Short Wood Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 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 and other senior and middle leaders. Meetings were also held with five members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed, including the latest information about pupils' progress, feedback to teachers following lesson observations and short visits to lessons. During this visit, you and the deputy headteacher joined me on brief visits to some classes to review teachers' work and to look at sample of pupils' books.

Context

A newly qualified teacher will take up their post in September 2013.

Main findings

Your school improvement plan includes all aspects from the recent inspection that were judged to require improvement. Sometimes actions planned are too general

and do not identify precisely what teachers need to do to raise pupils' achievement, particularly in mathematics.

Our joint scrutiny of pupils' work in lessons and their books shows that teachers are rightly providing more opportunities to solve more difficult mathematical questions. However, the scrutiny highlighted that the work provided for the most able is not as challenging as it could be. This is because teachers are sometimes unsure of how to deepen pupils' understanding of some mathematical concepts.

Current information collected by the school shows that rates of progress have accelerated for most pupils, but the progress of some pupils in Years 1, 3 and 4 while improving is at a slower rate. Our joint visits to classrooms show that the learning of those pupils' who pupils who speak English as an additional language is sometimes restricted. This is because some adults do not make sure that pupils speak in full sentences when answering questions or correct the most important spelling and grammatical errors.

Records of visits from your local authority adviser show that the proportion of good or better teaching has increased. The teachers in charge of English and mathematics are quickly acquiring the skills needed to carry out their roles more effectively. They have received training on how to observe lessons and carry out a scrutiny of pupils' work. Consequently, they are showing a growing understanding of the important link between the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and progress. However, a scrutiny of the records of lesson observations show that the pro-forma used to record visits often directs the observer to focus on what the teacher does rather than on the learning and progress of different groups of pupils.

Members of the governing body are taking suitable action to improve the way in which they hold the school to account. They have attended training, requested an external review of their effectiveness and have reorganised their structure to focus more on school improvement. Governors are becoming more familiar with pupil progress information and have a greater understanding of the management of teachers' performance. They have put in place more effective reporting procedures in order to ensure that they are kept well informed about the quality of teaching.

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 that mathematical activities for all pupils and especially the most able provide a good level of challenge
- provide appropriate help and guidance to teachers so that they are better able to meet the particular needs of those pupils who speak English as an additional language
- give more detail in the school improvement plan of the actions you expect teachers to take in order to raise pupils' achievement, especially in mathematics

- review the pro-forma for recording lesson observations so that there is a stronger focus on how well pupils' learn.

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 is providing well-measured guidance and support for your newly appointed English and mathematics subject leaders. Specific training from the local authority adviser has successfully improved the skills of governors in how to hold the school to account and to evaluate their impact on improving leadership. The governors are in the process of writing governor impact statements to demonstrate how standards have improved as a direct result of their actions. The first of these impact reports is due to be published in early September.

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

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth
Her Majesty's Inspector