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Mr P Thorne
Headteacher
Long Lane Primary School
Long Lane
Tilehurst
Reading
RG31 6YG

Dear Mr Thorne

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Long Lane Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 September 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.

Senior leaders and governors are taking incisive and urgent action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that judgements on the overall quality of teaching take account of pupils' progress over time and do not rely too heavily on evidence from one-off lesson observations.
- focus on the learning and progress of vulnerable groups of pupils when observing lessons
- collate information on the actions taken to accelerate the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and send this to HMI

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, four members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to

discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. The inspector also met a group of pupils to discuss their views on the work provided for them in lessons.

Context

Three new teachers have joined the school this term. One has additional responsibility for coordinating support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

Main findings

The headteacher and deputy headteacher acknowledge that they were disappointed with the outcome of the inspection, but it is clear that they are determined to drive improvement as quickly as possible. Senior leaders and governors have agreed to restructure the leadership team to include a new assistant headteacher role. This post will be advertised internally. Changes have also been made to middle leadership roles so that the teachers with responsibility for coordinating provision for English and mathematics take more of a lead in driving improvements in their subjects. Three new members of staff were recruited at the end of the summer term and have now joined the school. They are settling well. Senior leaders and governors are confident that these changes will increase the school's capacity for further improvement.

The school has engaged well with the local authority's 'Intensifying Support Programme' (ISP). Senior leaders make good use of the training and in-school support on offer. They have drawn up an action plan for this term that takes full account of the recommendations made by the inspection team and includes challenging targets for pupils' achievement, including those who are eligible for the support from additional government funding (the pupil premium). The impact of the plan will be reviewed with the local authority at the end of the autumn term.

Since the inspection, several key changes have been made: School leaders have drawn up clear guidance for teachers so that all know what is expected of them. Checks on pupils' progress now happen every six weeks so that underachievement is spotted and dealt with quickly. School leaders visit lessons regularly and they are beginning to collate information from different monitoring activities so that they have a clear picture of each teacher's strengths and areas for development. However, there is still not enough emphasis on the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement over time.

I will visit the school in the spring term to review the effectiveness of middle leaders.

External support

The local authority works closely with the school and monitors its progress carefully. Officers from the local authority are working with the school on a project to improve provision for pupils eligible for the pupil premium.

The headteacher and his staff value the regular contact they have with other local schools. School leaders plan staff training so that teachers can work together and share good practice. They also provide joint activities for pupils, which enrich the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Melanie Knowles

Her Majesty's Inspector