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19 September 2013

June Trantom
Headteacher
Hale School
Upper Hale
Farnham
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Dear Mrs Trantom

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hale School

Following my visit to your school on 19 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 June 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:

- build on existing systems by tracking the progress of different groups of pupils in more detail, for example those pupils eligible for free school meals
- set clear targets in the school's action plan for the proportions of pupils making and exceeding expected progress
- clearly define the role of the governing body in evaluating the improvement of the school.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, leaders of English, mathematics and the Early Years Foundation Stage, three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority

to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. I reviewed a range of other documentation provided by the school including lesson plans, samples of pupils' work, information about pupils' achievement, records of lesson observations conducted by school leaders, minutes of governing body meetings held since the inspection, records of staff training, and action plans for English, mathematics and the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Context

Since the inspection one teacher and one teaching assistant have left the school. Four new teachers have started as well as a new Nursery assistant. Four governors have left and elections are currently underway to recruit three new parent governors.

Main findings

As a result of the headteacher's swift and robust action, inadequate teaching has been eradicated. Where teaching requires improvement, teachers are getting effective individual support from the best teachers in the school. The leadership of the school has been strengthened by some new appointments, including the assistant deputy headteacher. The newly formed leadership team are addressing the areas for improvement well. A more rigorous and effective process of checking on teachers' performance is now in place. Pupils' progress is now being monitored more effectively by leaders, although this process needs greater detail about the progress of different groups of pupils, for example those pupils eligible for free school meals. The school's action plan accurately addresses the areas for improvement; however targets in the plan are not always linked to measurable improvements in pupils' achievement.

There is a comprehensive programme of staff training that matches the key areas of teaching that need to improve and all teachers have received training about the elements of good teaching. Teachers' marking is improving because pupils are getting more precise advice about what they need to do improve and are given time to make improvements in their work. There are now more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing across a range of subjects.

Leaders responsible for English, mathematics and the Early Years Foundation Stage now have much clearer roles in improving teaching and pupils' achievement. They have acted quickly to provide support for teachers, for example by making sure that lessons are planned that challenge all pupils appropriately. They also have a greater role in monitoring and evaluating improvements, for example by observing lessons regularly checking the quality of pupils' work.

The governing body continues to challenge and support school leaders effectively. Since the inspection, governors have rightly met with parents to explain how the school is going to rapidly improve. They have played a full part in the development

of the school's action plan and in the creation of the new process for checking on teachers' performance. Whilst governors collect first-hand evidence of improvements by visiting the school, their role in evaluating improvements is not yet defined clearly enough.

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 school has made good use of the support offered by the local authority. The leadership partner has supported the school in writing the action plan, challenging school leaders when necessary. He has helped develop the new data tracking system and he has a clear role in monitoring and evaluating the progress of the school. The local authority has also deployed consultants for English and mathematics to work with teachers at the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Haynes
Her Majesty's Inspector