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Dianne Blower
Headteacher
Wood End Primary School
Wood End Road
Wednesfield
WV11 1YQ

Dear Mrs Blower

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wood End Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 21 October 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 July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

- tackle inconsistencies in the quality of teaching
- ensure that feedback to teachers about their work identifies the detailed actions that they need to take in order to help different groups of pupils make faster progress
- take steps to bring the school's senior leadership team up to full strength.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders. I met with the Chair of Governors and one other governor, a representative of the local authority and a group of pupils. A range of documentation was reviewed, including the latest information about pupils' achievement. During the visit, senior leaders joined me on brief visits to classes to talk to pupils and review their work.

Context

Since the inspection two teachers have been appointed. One teacher has left. Governors have agreed to recruit a Family Liaison support Officer. At the last inspection the school's leadership team was not at full strength. This situation remains unchanged. Governors have temporarily re-organised the roles of senior leaders to ensure that all leadership responsibilities are covered.

Main findings

You and other senior leaders have responded urgently to the issues identified in the recent inspection. Your revised school improvement plan addresses all key areas identified in the inspection. The plan includes appropriate success criteria and time-specific actions to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

You have taken swift actions to improve attendance. Robust systems to check any absences have been established. A governor is working effectively with school leaders on this aspect. Your records show that attendance has improved. Governors are seeking to appoint a Family Liaison Support Officer to help to sustain improvements.

You and your senior leaders have set up programmes of training and support to improve teachers' subject knowledge in the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). You have purchased new reading books including appropriate books for pupils to take home. Several families attended a workshop at school to learn more about the school's approach to teaching phonics. Feedback from parents about this is very positive. Your current records show that more pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are now making faster progress in their knowledge of phonics. In 2013, the proportion of pupils achieving the levels expected in the Year 1 phonics check was significantly higher than the previous year.

Senior leaders regularly check the quality of marking in pupils' books and provide written feedback to teachers. Your records show improvements in teachers' marking since September. However, you also rightly identify that this is not consistent across all classes. Where necessary, you have set teachers appropriate, time-specific targets for improvement.

You and senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching. Feedback to teachers identifies successful practice and where further improvements are required. However, written feedback does not always identify the detailed actions teachers need to take in order to help different groups of pupils make faster progress. Where appropriate you have introduced individual support plans for teachers. Senior leaders supplement this by coaching and mentoring staff as necessary. Your

monitoring file shows some improvements in the quality of teaching. While this is a positive development, improvements are not yet rapid enough to impact on pupils' achievement. You have arranged visits for staff to learn from outstanding providers in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is too early to judge the impact of this.

You have rightly identified a need to improve teachers' judgements about standards in writing, reading and mathematics. You have organised new resources and staff training to support this. Your records show that teachers' judgements are now accurate. Teachers are clear about how they are accountable for pupils' progress in their classes. Your records of teachers' performance are detailed. Senior leaders now have all the necessary systems in place to secure rapid improvements in the quality of teaching across the school and see a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

The school does not have a full leadership team. With the support of governors, you have temporarily re-organised the roles and responsibilities of existing senior leaders. You have organised appropriate training to support them. They are taking responsibility for leading improvements across the school. However, the shared, additional responsibilities place great strain on the leadership team. I recommend that the local authority urgently seek to resolve the situation.

Governors continue to ask suitable questions about the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils. They have a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to become 'good'. They have taken a range of appropriate and effective actions since the inspection.

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 receive an appropriate level of support and challenge through local authority review meetings and regular visits from the adviser. However, the support has not been effective in resolving the long-standing issue of the reduced leadership team.

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

Yours sincerely

Marilyn Mottram
Her Majesty's Inspector