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16 October 2013

Mrs Amanda Buck
Headteacher
Scotts Park Primary School
Orchard Road
Bromley
Kent
BR1 2PR

Dear Mrs Buck

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Scotts Park Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 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 June 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- urgently undertake an external review of governance leading to a well-focused development plan
- ensure all governors receive training to help them challenge leaders about the impact of the pupil premium funding, and the quality of teaching in stretching more able pupils
- strengthen the school improvement plan by including specific dates to check the progress of the school and insert achievement targets for pupil groups so that all leaders and governors can judge how well remaining gaps are closing.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and your deputy headteacher, three members of the governing body including the Chair, and a representative of the local authority. I

scrutinised your school improvement plan, questionnaires from your parent survey, results on Parent View, lesson observation forms and recent achievement data. We visited classes together to see teaching and look at pupils' work.

Context

Since September several new teachers have joined the school and you have recruited five new parent governors.

Main findings

You and your deputy headteacher are taking effective action to make sure Scotts Park can become a good school. Your work is ensuring that the first two areas for improvement from your recent inspection are progressing well. Your work to strengthen partnerships with parents is effective. However, improvements in governance are not developing quickly enough. Governors are not taking urgent nor effective action to ensure that all governors have the knowledge and skills necessary to support school improvement.

The improvement plan has clear responsibilities for leaders and outlines what you are doing to improve the school. However, it does not include enough quantifiable targets for pupils' progress and specific dates when you and governors can evaluate how quickly the school is improving.

You are analysing pupils' progress carefully. You know where there are a few remaining gaps that must close. Your headteacher's report to governors is succinct and accurate. The Venn diagrams provide a useful tool to help everyone see which groups are making good progress and the few pupils who are lagging behind. You are using this with teachers to make sure that planning and teaching continues to be good and support pupils' typically good progress. However, in some classes we visited the pace was too slow. Teachers do not scan the room to assess which pupils can move on to more difficult work and which need longer time and more help. Teachers' expectations for a few more able pupils are too low.

Your teaching and marking policies set high expectations for teachers, helping them to move towards typically outstanding teaching. Marking is regular and there is good use of praise. However, the depth and quality of next-step guidance is variable. Not all pupils respond well enough to comments in their books. Through joint lesson observations you regularly assess teachers' work. There is good support for new teachers. Sometimes, feedback by observers does not give enough detail about the quality of learning of different groups of pupils in lessons and the progress as seen in their books.

You are developing much better engagement with parents through Parent Mail, your new newsletter and through the parent and staff association. Your recent parent survey is very positive. Over 93% of parents who returned the questionnaire would recommend this school to another parent. Results on the Ofsted site Parent View

have improved since your inspection in June. Your governors know they must do more to listen to parental views and share with them how governors are supporting the school.

The external review of governance has not been completed. The delay from June to mid-October is hampering how quickly governors can develop the skills necessary to become highly effective. A strategic response to this area for improvement is lacking in the school improvement plan. Governors do not have any other action plan for developing their work.

Several governors are new to the governing body. The Chair is ensuring that they are acutely aware of the responsibilities and expectations of the role. Governors are booking themselves on training courses, a positive sign of their commitment to improving their knowledge. Governors do not have an external comprehensive view of strengths and areas needing urgent development. All governors require urgent training to understand information about pupils' achievement. Some governors are aware of the School Data Dashboard but not enough governors have the skills to gauge how well the pupils are performing compared with national expectations and to question leaders about it. There is insufficient monitoring of how the premium funding is enabling targeted pupils to achieve as well as their peers.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspections. We agreed that once the external review of governance is complete I will review the findings and your action plan.

External support

The local authority has increased its support for the school and is aware of the urgent need to improve governance. Local authority advisers are working with leaders to help sharpen planning for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the English adviser is guiding developments in writing. The school has contracted an external consultant to give additional support with mathematics and a new plan for embedding mathematical understanding in all subjects is taking shape. The local authority is planning to provide additional support for developing better governance and is contributing to the cost of the external review.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanna Beckford-Hall
Her Majesty's Inspector