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Catrin Cox
Slade Green Infant School
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Dear Mrs Cox

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Slade Green Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 23 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 taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- improve school action planning to show clear monitoring and evaluation activity
- ensure that pupil performance information is used in lesson planning

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated school improvement action plans, achievement data, a sample of pupils' work and records of governing body meetings. I visited all classes with you in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

Context

Since the inspection the school has been re-designated as a primary school from September 2014. The building expansion programme that was underway has been suspended. The Chair of Governors has resigned. Two newly qualified teachers have been appointed and one teacher is on maternity leave.

Main findings

School leaders responded quickly to the inspection findings. They are keen to use their experience and improve the school to consistently good. Middle leaders contribute more to improving the quality of teaching than previously and they welcome this extra responsibility.

There is a sharper focus upon teaching and learning. Leaders are clearer about what makes successful learning because they visit classes more frequently. Regular mentoring for teachers means they feel confident to engage pupils actively in lessons. Planning shows pupils' involvement through drama, writing, speaking and listening activities. Phase leaders monitor the progress of different groups of pupils closely and they share effective practice across each year group. Expectations for better rates of progress are now evident in lessons. There is a more accurate picture of the quality of teaching across the school. Teachers receive additional support from their phase leader if expectations are not high enough for pupils.

In the nursery learning meets children's needs and interests more closely. Planning now shows the intended outcome for each activity rather than merely listing the resources. The new nursery teacher receives strong support from school leaders in response to the inspection areas for development. The outdoor environment is not inviting however, this area has been affected by the suspended building works.

School leaders have introduced efficient tracking systems to analyse how all pupils are performing. This is new. Pupil progress meetings between leaders and class teachers use this evidence to raise expectations and set challenging targets in English and mathematics for each pupil. Teachers have started to use this information in lesson planning but the data needs to link directly to teaching to ensure all pupils make the best progress in every lesson.

The school action plan is detailed. It has been shared with staff and governors. There is a common sense of purpose as a result. The roles and responsibilities of school leaders have been updated to achieve these priorities. The action plan has clear objectives and timescales but the monitoring and evaluation of these objectives need to be more specific to check that identified targets are met.

The membership of the governing body has changed. Governors have taken this opportunity to learn from their previous weaknesses. Governors carry out school

visits in line with the schedule in the school improvement plan. They are beginning to use this information to challenge leaders about the impact and speed of their work to address school priorities. The external review of governance is in progress; through this process it is evident that governors are critically examining and improving their strategic role.

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 received effective support from the local authority since the inspection. Local authority officers have worked closely with the Governing Body to improve its effectiveness. It has arranged appropriate training for governors so they now challenge school leaders in an open and constructive manner. Additional support from a local leader of learning; a headteacher of a good school, has been brokered with a focus upon leading a school through expansion. Regular meetings occur through the Partnership Board to monitor and challenge the school's progress in line with the milestones indicated in the Statement of Action. The local authority has undertaken to source additional support for the school in the use of pupil performance data.

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

Yours sincerely

Ann Debono

Her Majesty's Inspector