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13 November 2013

Mr J Willetts
Brindley Heath Junior School
Enville Road
Kinver
DY7 6AA

Dear Mr Willetts

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Brindley Heath Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 11 November 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 September 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:

- Involve more staff in leading some strands of the school action plan.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, 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 visited classrooms in all year groups, looked at pupils' work, and scrutinised governing body minutes and school records of recent lesson monitoring activities.

Main findings

The school has responded quickly with a brief, well focussed plan of action. There is frequent and accurate monitoring of this by the executive head and deputy head.

The plan, however, is too dependent on these two leaders; there is opportunity for other staff to take on some of the development strands.

In mathematics lessons, pupils enjoy their work, attempting difficult problems with enthusiasm and persistence. Teachers skilfully ensure each pupil is stretched to their potential. In English lessons, teachers are not consistently timing their whole class interventions effectively. When they do, individual pupils maintain a brisk pace through their work. But sometimes pupils have to wait for the rest of the class before carrying on, or do not fully complete a task. The school is reviewing the way literacy teaching can better link to topic work in the afternoon. Teachers mark mathematics and English work accurately and frequently, and give suggestions for further improvement. Those suggestions are crisp and easy for pupils to act upon straight away in mathematics, but in English allow pupils scope to avoid responding directly.

A new chair of Governors has quickly embraced the need for swift action and he and his colleagues are frequent school visitors, so fully aware of the improvements being made. Minutes of meetings are detailed but lack evaluative comment, making it difficult to see what governors think about the impact of the actions described.

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

Local authority support is focussed on timely training for governors and occasional visits to the school to evaluate the impact of the school's actions. There are effective links with other schools within and outside the local authority. Five teachers have embarked on a range of short, intensive teacher development programmes with a local teaching school. The local authority rightly judges the school leadership to have a proven track record of improvement (in mathematics) and shares my confidence in the capacity of the school at all levels to mirror this work in English. There is sufficient external support.

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

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright
Her Majesty's Inspector