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19 November 2013

Mrs D Herbert
Headteacher
Burnwood Community Primary School
Chell Heath Road
Chell Heath
Turnstall
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
ST6 7LP

Dear Mrs Herbert

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Burnwood Community Primary School, Stoke-On-Trent

Following my visit to your school on 18 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:

- create opportunities for teachers and subject leaders to observe and consider the contributing factors of good or better teaching and subject leadership in other schools.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders. I met the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school

improvement plan was evaluated. Documentation was scrutinised including the raising attainment plan and the school's self-evaluation summary. I also toured the school with you and visited all classes while pupils were in lessons. I sampled some pupils' books.

Context

The substantive deputy headteacher is currently on maternity leave. During her absence, the senior leadership team consists of an acting deputy headteacher and acting assistant headteacher. A leading practitioner has been appointed to further develop teaching and learning initiatives throughout the school. There has been no change in the school's status since the section 5 inspection which judged the school to require improvement.

Main findings

The determination and positive attitude of the headteacher meant that she lost no time in driving the school forward. Within two working days of the inspection, the headteacher and senior leaders amended the school improvement plan to focus sharply on the necessary improvements. Training needs were identified and delivered speedily. External agencies with the necessary expertise were identified and invited to provide on-going support. Training and regular staff meetings, which include teaching assistants, have secured consistent messages, expectations and methods of approach. For example, teachers' feedback in their marking of pupils' work relates to the specific subject skills expected in the lesson. Errors are identified and time is given so that pupils can correct their work.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' rates of progress. Assessments of pupils every half term are helping teachers and leaders to identify those pupils who need additional help. Intervention is provided and reviewed regularly. Setting within each year group helps teachers to plan work which matches the pupils' needs and provide flexible intervention when necessary. The organisation of the Early Years Foundation Stage has been improved to clearly identify specific learning areas.

Teachers are more aware of the basic skills pupils need to learn and consolidate in handwriting, spelling, grammar, punctuation, extended writing and mathematics. More training is planned to further raise teachers' expectations of pupils' progress in lessons and over time. The school improvement plan clearly identifies ambitious timelines for training and initiatives to take effect. Priorities are identified and systematic steps are planned for on-going developments. There is a clear expectation for teachers to embark on continuous development. Those teachers with strong teaching skills are invited to share their good practice and mentor others.

Senior leaders, together with subject leaders, have implemented a regular programme of lesson observations to monitor the quality of teaching, reinforce agreed priorities and provide evaluative feedback. Leaders regularly evaluate

teachers' plans, observe lessons and examine pupils' work. Feedback to teachers is provided immediately and any areas for development are checked within reasonable timelines.

The actions already taken, and those planned for the future, are relevant, specific and purposeful. Governance was judged by inspectors to be effective. Governors have eagerly taken up their responsibilities in evaluating the school's progress in bringing about improvements. They are clear about the necessary priorities, where weaknesses lie and how training and support are expected to bring about improvements. They are confident in their application of performance management to hold others to account. They are clear about the links between the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment and rates of progress. All governors receive regular reports from leaders and members of staff with responsibilities and they are confident in testing out the assertions within reports. Governors acknowledge that the timescales are challenging but they believe the measurable targets provide a means of suitable accountability.

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

School leaders have carefully identified the necessary support needed from the local authority and other strategic partners. The local authority will review the school's progress every term with the help of accredited external support. In addition, local authority representatives will conduct further reviews with the headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body. The local authority representative echoes the school's priorities in securing improved pupil progress and attainment. She confirmed that the staff at Burnwood, 'Never give up on children' and that she has confidence in the school to bring about the necessary improvements.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Stoke-on-Trent and as below.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deana Holdaway".

Deana Holdaway

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy

- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk] – for academies