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7 January 2014

Mrs Liz Bird
Headteacher
Eythorne Elvington Community Primary School
Adelaide Road
Eythorne
Kent
CT15 4AN

Dear Mrs Bird

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Eythorne Elvington Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 December 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 second 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 now taking more effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- Embed and consolidate work started to ensure teaching is consistently good, and that outstanding practice starts to emerge.

Evidence

During the visit I held meetings with you, the head of school, the subject leaders for English and mathematics, 2 members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last monitoring inspection. I visited each class to see the school at work. I reviewed your evidence file showing the actions you have taken to move the school forward.

Context

There have been no changes to the school's context since the last monitoring inspection in September 2013. At the first monitoring visit in September the right actions were not being taken to move the school forward.

Main findings

You have tackled the recommendations from my last visit with vigour. You have a positive determination to move the school to 'good' which you have communicated effectively to the whole staff team. There is now a buzz of resolve in the school as everyone is working together with a shared purpose.

You are now in school for a greater amount of time each week which has helped you to drive improvements forward. Since my last visit you have reviewed the role of the head of school; her greater involvement in developing and making changes has assisted the school to move forward more quickly.

Teachers have clarity about the features of good teaching because you have revisited and updated the teaching and learning policy. This has been well supported by appropriate training for both individual teachers and the whole staff and teachers utilise these features well in their day to day lessons. Teachers have benefited from visiting a local school to see good practice elsewhere. They are applying what they have seen in their own work and are starting to set tasks in lessons to provide greater challenge to pupils. There has been helpful support from teachers within the federation, for example to develop marking. You and the head of school are checking carefully that teachers are putting what they learn into place. As a result you report a higher proportion of good teaching in the school.

As part of your work you have led work to improve displays and how well they are used to support learning. When I last visited, this work had been started but was ineffective because displays lacked relevant information and pupils did not understand how to use them. These displays are now kept up to date and pupils are clear that they are helpful. Pupils' independence in learning is starting to improve because they can now access support without having to wait for their teacher.

You have created a positive climate for learning in the shared areas by getting rid of clutter and creating specific teaching areas for small groups. This is helping pupils to focus more on their work. Resources are better used because they are stored in classes rather than the corridor and are easier to access. The improved outside learning space for the youngest pupils is organised well into key areas of learning so they receive the full range of opportunities to which they are entitled. It is helpful that you have allocated a specific learning area for the Year 1 pupils in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class so they can concentrate better away from the bustle of the younger children.

Subject leaders appreciate the training you have given them. They have developed a good understanding of their role and know exactly what actions they need to take. They are looking forward to attending 'pupil progress' meetings to gain a whole school view of what needs to improve. You are rightly getting them more involved in school leadership by asking them to support and mentor other staff.

Governors continue to provide helpful challenge to the school's leaders. They use their meetings effectively to check how well leaders at all levels are playing their part in moving the school forward.

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 local authority has helpfully increased its level of support to the school since my last visit. Working alongside the school's leaders, local authority officers have provided useful training to develop specific aspects of teaching and learning. Staff have taken this on board well and it has helped them to improve. I am pleased you are working with other local schools so that teachers can see a range of lessons beyond Eythorne Elvington. Such work is invaluable to enable teachers to benefit from good practice outside of the school and I urge you to continue with it.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Gard
Her Majesty's Inspector