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17 December 2013

Mr Nigel Bruen
Headteacher
Coleman Primary School
Gwendolen Road
LE5 5FS

Dear Mr Bruen

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Coleman Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 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:

- include in the school improvement plan targets for the proportion of pupils who will make better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics in each year group to help leaders and governors to measure the success of teaching over time
- provide training for governors to help them understand and analyse the data on pupils' progress across the school
- refine the school improvement plan to include quantified measures of success, clearer milestones and the discrete roles of those checking on the progress against the stated actions and those evaluating the impact of these actions.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the assistant headteacher, the subject leaders for English and mathematics, and five governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. I also met with a representative of the local authority. We visited almost all classes to look at the learning that was taking place. The school improvement plan and senior leaders' records of checking the quality of teaching were evaluated

Context

There have been no significant changes since the school's last inspection. A new deputy headteacher is due to start in January 2014.

Main findings

You have refined your approach to managing the performance of teachers by providing them with more challenging targets for pupils' achievement. As a result, teachers are left in no doubt about what you expect to see in their practice. Your observations and those of the senior leaders provide teachers with feedback about strengths in their teaching, as well as targets for further improvement. You have rightly recognised that teachers need to have a sharper understanding of how well pupils are progressing in each class and that they use this information effectively to adjust teaching. To this end, a new tracking system is being introduced, with associated training. This is intended to bring even greater rigour to the already established frequency of pupil progress meetings held between leaders and teachers.

In the classes we visited there was evidence of pupils being involved in a broad range of activities, particularly in writing and mathematics. Pupils I spoke with were clear about their targets in writing and mathematics. You provided me with evidence of pupils' writing, for example in Year 3 where pupils have been learning about Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood, which is imaginative and reflects the greater demands teachers make with regard to accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar. A sample of exercise books shows an increasingly consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work by teachers. It is clear to pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils are given time to respond. Improvements are most successful when pupils are given examples of how they can improve; this best practice is not yet consistent across all classes.

Governors who met the inspector are supportive and committed to making sure that there is improvement in pupils' achievement across all year groups. Governors recognise the need to be more skilful in their analysis of data as a means of challenging leaders to increase the pace of improvement. Since the last inspection, governors have identified their own particular focus groups, for example for mathematics, to help them to see how quickly improvements are being made.

The school improvement plan clearly deals with all of the areas in the last inspection. Actions are suitable and detailed. There are some measurable success criteria, for example in relation to improving teaching to be consistently good or better. However, success criteria are less clear about the proportion of pupils who are capable of making better than expected progress. The plan does not include stepped milestones which would help leaders and governors to check on progress at key intervals. Success criteria to help evaluate the impact of leaders on raising pupils' standards are not precise enough.

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 is continuing to take positive steps to support the school to improve. It has brokered a partnership with a local successful school to help improve teaching and learning in mathematics by sharing effective practice. Planned visits by a school improvement adviser to carry out lesson observations jointly with senior leaders are well judged. Support is being provided to the recently appointed Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing body by giving them access to training which is nationally accredited by the National College for Teaching and Learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector