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17 December 2013

Hayley Sutton
Headteacher
Leighton Primary School
Orton Malborne
Peterborough
PE2 5PL

Dear Ms Sutton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Leighton 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 July 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:

- set checkpoints to measure progress in the school development plan and tighten timescales for the completion of tasks
- ensure that following observations of lessons, staff know exactly what they should do to improve their teaching
- develop your plan to help teachers with aspects of mathematics that they find difficult to teach and develop a link to a school that achieves good results from teaching the subject
- complete the external review of governance by the end of next term and devise a suitable action plan for improvements in response to the report.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, the 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 and action plans were evaluated. I looked at the school's latest data on pupils' learning, your records of monitoring teaching and learning and reports from external reviews by local authority advisers. You took me on a brief tour of the school visiting all classes. I looked at a random sample of pupils' work in mathematics.

Context

Since the previous section 5 inspection three out of the four phase leaders (responsible for different year groups) are new to post. Two teachers left the school at the end of the summer term and have been replaced by teachers on temporary contracts.

Main findings

You are addressing the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection positively and with determination. Your ambition for Leighton pupils to aim high and become successful learners comes across strongly. You know what needs to be achieved and, importantly, how to do it. The development plan explains how actions taken should lead to improvements in learning. Timescales, however, require tightening, with dates set for regular checks of progress along the way to ensure that there is no slippage in getting to good quickly. Your systems for checking the quality of learning and teaching are thorough ensuring that you use a range of evidence to make accurate judgements. It is important to specify exactly what teachers need to work on to improve their performance. Marking of pupils' written work in mathematics is regular but variable in the usefulness of teachers' comments and the quality of pupils' responses.

Challenging targets for pupils' progress have been set. You are rightly keeping a watchful eye on the progress made by all groups and individuals that receive extra help and support. This will be important in justifying the enhanced level of funding invested in teachers and other staff to support their learning.

Governors are developing their leadership skills suitably through training provided by the local authority and mentoring by an experienced governor from another school. They offer a wide range of skills that have been particularly helpful, for example, in supporting school leaders in tackling some sensitive and difficult personnel issues. Not all governors undertake school visits to check on the school's work. Governors interpret data accurately and use this information to challenge staff when appropriate. The governing body has yet to set a date for its external review.

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 welcomes regular and useful support provided by local authority advisers. Their guidance has been pivotal in helping school leaders to inject rigour into their work and to hold staff accountable firmly for pupils' achievement. The local authority provides training for staff and governors. Advisers contribute to the recruitment process for new staff and the annual review of the headteacher's performance. The school would benefit from a link to a school with a proven track record in teaching mathematics effectively.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman
Her Majesty's Inspector