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James Allan
Chandos Primary School
Vaughton Street South
Highgate
Birmingham
B12 0YN

Dear Mr Allan

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Chandos Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 February 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 20 November 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.

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 actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan and post Ofsted action plan were evaluated. I was taken around the school during lessons and I evaluated further documentation including: pupils' progress tracking records; minutes of governing body meetings; the headteacher's report to governors; and records of monitoring activities.

Context

Since the last section 5 inspection in November 2013 a Year 6 teacher has been appointed who is responsible for leading English throughout the school.

Main findings

You and your deputy headteacher have worked quickly to address the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. In addition, you have rightly focused your attention on raising standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. Half-termly assessments and pupil progress meetings have helped to identify those pupils falling behind or making insufficient progress and support has been provided. Resources have been purchased and training planned.

You have a clear and strategic view of how improvements will be made. You have rightly delegated responsibilities to managers and as their skills have improved, you have increasingly included them as fellow leaders: responsible and accountable for bringing about speedy improvements.

Substantial support has been offered by an independent consultant and three schools within the Greet Teaching School Alliance. Your teachers and managers have visited the schools, observed effective practice, shared planning and received on-going support within their own classes. You, your deputy headteacher and increasingly your phase and subject leaders have rigorously monitored the outcomes of these partnerships. Your checks are frequent and conducted in sufficient depth to recognise emerging strengths as well as identify further areas for improvement. Follow up checks are conducted within short time scales to ensure that individuals take effective action to address all areas for development. You expect and facilitate rapid improvement but all staff and governors are invited to contribute to ideas, initiatives and solutions. As a result, everyone feels part of the journey and future managers and leaders are in the making.

Your planned actions for improvement are sufficiently detailed so that teachers, teaching assistants, managers, fellow leaders and governors are all clear about what has to be achieved and by when. Your expectations of staff are specific. Planned outcomes are clear so that those responsible for monitoring the school's progress can assess the impact of actions taken to date. Procedures for evaluations are clearly defined and closely linked, but not confused, with the activities for monitoring.

All leaders are determined to improve the quality of teaching. Plans and monitoring records make clear links between teaching and its impact on learning and improving rates of pupils' progress. The Standards for Teachers have been adopted as the basis of whole school expectations. Your judgements about the quality of teaching rightly draw upon a wide range of evidence including lesson plans and observations as well as evaluations of the quality of pupils' work in books and their recorded rates

of progress. Your areas of development for teachers are highly individual and your monitoring records show a range of tips for increasing pace, reviewing learning, improving pupils' attitudes, simplifying activities and deploying other adults in the classroom. Your records of teaching show that teachers have readily taken on various tips for improvement within a short period of time and with some success.

In order that progress measures can be analysed accurately you have ensured that teachers' assessments are moderated both internally and independently. Assessment has developed from paper-based tests to on-going checks of pupils' progress. You can demonstrate improvements in the quality of marking and feedback but you are not complacent and improvements continue to be identified and implemented. You and your deputy headteacher are aware that recently appointed members to the senior leadership team require ongoing support in these early days but you have seen that they have seized these new opportunities and risen to the challenge. Everyone understands that a sense of urgency is key to the school's success.

The Chair of the Governing Body is well aware that while the quality of teaching is improving, consistent high quality teaching across the school is a priority. Governors are well informed by your reports to them and your new format clearly accounts for the impact of actions taken to date on pupils' learning. The Chair of the Governing Body is determined to rigorously evaluate the school's progress in getting to good and hold leaders to account for its success. The Chair is well aware of the necessity to draw on the right levels of expertise and skills to meet the growing demands, responsibilities and accountabilities of governance in the near future.

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 resource is limited but the school's advisor has been able to signal highly effective and supportive links with two other schools involved in the teaching school alliance. The advisor is aware of the heightened pace of monitoring in the school and the impact it is having on improving the quality of teaching. The advisor confirmed your view that while good quality support was highly valued and effective the capacity for improvement has to grow from within.

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

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway
Her Majesty's Inspector