

PROTECT-INSPECTION

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14 February 2014

Mrs Tracey Oram
Headteacher
Tiptree Heath Primary School
103 Maldon Road
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Colchester
CO5 0PG

Dear Mrs Oram

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Tiptree Heath Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 12 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 December 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- link more closely the actions in the school improvement plan to what is required to improve teaching to good as recommended at the last inspection
- remove the activities from the school improvement plan that are not a priority at this time
- make sure that teachers targets for improvement are closely linked to the school improvement plan
- sharpen up good practice visits so that they have the desired impact on strengthening teaching
- check with more rigour that improvements that have been agreed are implemented by all teachers

- work closely with the local authority to improve teaching and leadership.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I visited all classes in the school to observe the teaching and learning.

Context

Since the inspection the Year 1 and 2 classes have been amalgamated and a teacher has left the school.

Main findings

You have altered the school improvement plan and your self-evaluation of the school. These documents are not helpful enough to you or the governing body because they do not show clearly enough the actions that will be taken to address the recommendations about teaching from the last inspection. There are too many priorities included that are a distraction from your central purpose which is to improve teaching. The school performance management procedures provide targets to hold teachers to account for pupil progress. Targets for teaching are not sufficiently linked to the priorities in the school improvement plan so that it is unclear whether teachers are being equipped to make an effective contribution to whole school improvement.

You have rightly identified the need to enable teachers to visit other school and work together to share good practice. However, your plans for this are not precise enough so that you will know when teachers return from these activities what the impact on their teaching will be. You have led staff meetings to improve marking, establish what good teaching is and to implement a calculation policy. However, checks on the impact of this work have not had the rigour necessary to ensure that all teachers realise that they have to improve their teaching quickly.

The governing body has taken the opportunity for training so that they are knowledgeable about what is expected of them. Visits are more regular and questioning about school improvement is becoming more challenging. It is understood that they need to provide more structured support and challenge to you.

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

Since the inspection the school and the local authority have not had enough contact. The local authority has a number of initiatives to support schools that require improvement that you and the governors should take advantage of.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Essex Local Authority.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector