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Mr David Purslow
Headteacher
The Martin Wilson School
New Park Road
Castlefields
Shrewsbury
SY1 2SP

Dear Mr Purslow

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Martin Wilson School

Following my visit to your school on 6 March 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 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. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that pupils have more opportunities to write creatively and that good examples are displayed around the school.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, your senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body, other governors, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's plans for improvement and reviewed some of the school's achievement data. I visited classrooms and observed parts of five lessons, talked to a number of pupils and

looked at samples of pupils' work. My visit coincided with world book day; the school had arranged special activities linked to reading.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the recent inspection.

Main findings

You, your staff and governors have been working with a greater sense of urgency to tackle the areas for development identified in the report. Your action plans are detailed. Plans accurately reflect the areas for development. The special educational needs coordinator is now part of the senior leadership team. This has improved your capacity to monitor teaching and learning. The senior leadership team are making more accurate judgments about the quality of learning and take account of the progress pupils make. These are shown through your tracking information and in the work in pupils' exercise books.

Pupils' progress is improving but remains inconsistent from class to class. This is because teaching is not yet consistently good. Teachers have higher expectations of pupils and plan work that is more demanding. Teachers' planning takes better account of pupils' different starting points. In mathematics, pupils have more opportunities to use their knowledge and understanding and apply it to real-life problems. Pupils are writing at greater length and across more subjects but there are not sufficient opportunities for pupils to write creatively. Pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar are improving because teachers are placing greater emphasis on this. This is reflected in teachers' marking in books; pupils are expected to correct their work when there is a misunderstanding. High quality artwork is displayed around the school but opportunities are missed to celebrate and promote pupils' creative writing.

Staff training is linked to school development plans. Teachers have had training on the new marking policy and assessing the different levels pupils are working at. Individual teachers have had tailored support to develop aspects of their work. Teachers are beginning to plan work with other teachers from local schools and share each other's good practice.

The governors are supportive and challenging. They are keen to see pupils' progress improving. They have tightened up their monitoring to link with the school development plans and the areas for development. Governors have undertaken training to ensure they understand a range of data. They plan their visits to school carefully so that they can use a range of information to increasingly hold you and the senior leadership team to account.

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 actively supported the school's drive for improvement. It has provided a comprehensive programme of support tailored to the needs of the school. The school works with a number of local schools who support each other through sharing good practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector