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10 March 2014

Mrs S Pengelly
Headteacher
Coley Primary School
Wolseley Street
Reading
RG1 6AZ

Dear Mrs Pengelly

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Coley Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. HMI conducted an additional advisory visit in May 2013.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, a group of pupils, and three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body. I conducted a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. We observed teaching in six classes. I looked at pupils' work and teachers' marking. I also scrutinised a range of the school's documentation.

Context

The headteacher started in September 2013. Three teachers and one teaching assistant have left the school since the first monitoring inspection in December 2012. Three teachers and five teaching assistants have started. Three governors have left

the governing body and four have joined. The Chair of the Governing Body and the vice-chair, both advanced skills governors, took over these roles in July 2013.

Main findings

The headteacher has wasted no time in improving teaching. She has rightly established the expectation that only good teaching is good enough. She is dealing robustly with weak teaching. Consequently, while inconsistencies in the quality of teaching persist, the proportion of good teaching is beginning to grow. In the best lessons, pupils are challenged well and work hard, they know what they need to do to succeed and they receive regular and detailed feedback about how to improve. However, pupils are not yet given enough opportunities to make improvements to their work. Teachers are now held fully accountable for the achievement of the pupils that they teach through leaders' regular and accurate checks on teachers' performance. Teachers and teaching assistants receive frequent, detailed feedback about what they are doing well and they are given precise points for development which they are expected to act on swiftly.

Pupils' achievement is improving through a combination of better teaching and the effective extra support that teaching assistants provide. Leaders now track pupils' achievement much more regularly and in detail. This means that when pupils are at risk of underachieving, often when teaching is weaker, they are given the right extra help and support to get them back on track. In 2013 pupils' achievement rose at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils made good progress from starting points that were below average to reach standards that were broadly average. These improvements are set to continue in 2014. Evidence about pupils' achievement shows that, overall, pupils' progress is accelerating. However, achievement in writing, particularly for boys, is lower than it is in reading and mathematics. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils. The same is true for pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium are, in general, making more rapid progress than other pupils.

Senior leaders and governors have taken effective action to make improvements. Leaders have rightly ensured that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate and that pupils are challenged more by the work they are given in lessons. Leaders provide regular and appropriate training for teachers and teaching assistants. Senior leaders lead by example through their own effective teaching. Leaders work closely with governors to evaluate the progress the school is making. Governors challenge and support leaders effectively because they regularly receive and interrogate good quality data about pupils' achievement. Governors have a clear view about the strengths of the school, as well as what needs to improve further. They have ensured that there is stronger financial management. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent and the good impact that it has on pupils' achievement.

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

A local authority adviser works closely with senior leaders and visits the school very regularly. She knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She has provided valuable challenge and support for senior leaders, including helping them to deal effectively with weaker teaching and with difficulties recruiting staff. She monitors the progress of the school and has ensured that the school's action plan is sharply focused on the right priorities.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Haynes
Her Majesty's Inspector