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3 March 2014

Mr Gerry Heaton
Headteacher
Hungerford Primary School
Fairview Road
Hungerford
Berkshire
RG17 0BT

Dear Mr Heaton,

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hungerford Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 3 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 January 2014. 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:

- sharpen the focus of senior leaders on the quality of teaching and how this helps pupils make faster progress
- make sure that pupils are given work that is challenging enough to match their differing abilities and are not all doing the same task in lessons
- strengthen the impact of marking and feedback so that pupils know how to improve their work clearly
- ensure that improvement plans identify the right priorities for improvement, and show how success will be checked rather than simply the actions that will be taken.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and other senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan and read other documents such as the local authority's most recent note of visit. I looked through pupils' books, and, with you, visited classrooms and outside areas in the school.

Main findings

Since the inspection you have put in place a range of strategies to address the areas identified for improvement. You have concentrated on establishing the core values of the school and, through these, improving pupils' learning behaviour. Visits to classrooms confirmed the positive impact of this work, with pupils concentrating hard and working well. However, it was evident that this work has not yet begun to impact swiftly enough on standards of teaching.

Your early actions included teaching all classes yourself for a short period of time. The opportunity was missed to demonstrate these high standards to staff because teachers did not observe your good teaching. This did not give you a precise oversight of the quality of teaching in the school quickly enough. Marking and feedback in pupils' books shows limited signs of improvement this term and remains inconsistent. Teachers are not yet providing well-matched activities for all pupils; too many are all given the same work, no matter their ability.

Your focus on providing opportunities for extended writing is slowly starting to take effect. Visits to classrooms showed pupils engaged in a range writing activities but these still tend to be shorter pieces of work. Limited displays of pupils' written work around the school have not yet promoted this focus sufficiently.

The school action plan is not sufficiently precise or focused on the key areas for improvement. You have outlined some useful actions, but the plan is not clear enough about what success will look like in terms of standards of teaching, or children's learning and progress. This lack of detail means that you and governors cannot accurately monitor the impact of the actions being taken.

School data show that currently, pupils in Years 1, 2 and 5 are achieving better; this is not the case in all year groups. Those children eligible for pupil premium funding are still making slower progress than other children because there has been limited attention given to the impact of work with this group thus far. The external review for pupil premium spending has not yet taken place.

An external review has not yet been undertaken for governors, but will take place in the next few days. Governor support for the analysis and evaluation of pupil progress has become even more focused since the inspection. Specific meetings now

take place to hold the school to account for actions taken. Governors have undertaken some training to help them challenge more effectively and to plan their actions. However, the success of all of this will depend on more effective leadership of the governing body and the completion of a precise school action plan.

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 is supporting the school effectively. The School Improvement Advisor meets with the headteacher every three weeks to assess improvements in teaching and learning and has already carried out a teaching and learning review. Joint observations with local authority officers have helped you and the senior leaders to identify further areas for improvement in teaching. The local authority has a good knowledge of the school and has identified precisely what needs to improve. Specialist support in mathematics has been provided, although this has had limited impact thus far. Termly meetings will be held to judge the rate and improvement of pupils' progress and support will be offered to the headteacher in terms of drafting a sharper action plan.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for West Berkshire and as below.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Anwar
Her Majesty's Inspector