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Mrs Sarah Stokes
Headteacher
Dormansland Primary School
Clinton Hill
Dormansland
Lingfield
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Dear Mrs Stokes

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Dormansland Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 March 2013, 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 all teachers are fully aware of the features of good and outstanding teaching and that they understand clearly how children learn most effectively
- make sure that pupils' work is being marked thoroughly and effective feedback given so that they know how to make better progress.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I looked through school documentation and evaluated the school improvement plan. I briefly visited all classrooms with you during my visit.

Context

Since the last inspection, several new staff have been appointed, including yourself. Two new office staff, a business manager and two new teachers have joined the school, the latter teaching in Year 1 and Year 4.

Main findings

Since joining the school in January 2014 you have worked with energy and determination and you show a precise understanding of what needs to improve to secure good progress for pupils. You and your deputy are productively addressing some deep rooted weaknesses in the school, well supported by the consultant headteacher. Governors and the local authority have well placed confidence in your capacity to improve the school.

You have instigated profound changes to the way in which teachers plan lessons, and this is beginning to show a positive impact. Because of your close monitoring and developmental feedback, all teachers now plan lessons more effectively. Our visits to classrooms confirmed this. You have implemented a rigorous system for tracking how well pupils are making progress. This enables you to identify more effectively which children need more support and to use teaching assistants to help them. Teachers, rightly, now have to explain their assessment of pupil progress to you and this has helped you to check the accuracy of these judgments.

You have undertaken a thorough review of marking and assessment and of the quality of teaching. This has led to a well-focused series of training sessions for teachers. These are beginning to take effect, although there is still considerable work to do. Pupils are beginning to make better progress, particularly in Year 3 and Year 1. In these year groups, pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding are now catching up with other pupils more quickly. Marking remains inconsistent. It does not give clear advice to pupils about how they can improve; nor does it address all the mistakes made, for example in spelling or punctuation. Sometimes the teacher's own spelling is not correct. The variety of tasks set in lessons is still not challenging or engaging all groups of pupils well enough.

You have further developed the school system for monitoring behaviour and it is now clear and precise. Good training for teaching assistants and teachers in

behaviour management, alongside a strong system of support for individual pupils has resulted in a significant improvement in behaviour this term.

The school improvement plan is well-focused and sensibly short term. Not all the areas in the plan have precise enough measurable outcomes and governors agreed that this makes it harder to check how well the school is doing.

Governors have worked quickly since the inspection to identify what actions they need to take to move the school forward. They have realigned and added governor meetings to better address the areas identified for improvement, and have increased the level of challenge offered to the school. An external review of governance and of the way that pupil premium funding is spent has been scheduled for later this term.

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 well through Babcock International. You continue to benefit from the deployment of a consultant headteacher for two and a half days a week, and support with data analysis has been given by your leadership partner. High quality training has been provided for subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator, although it is too early to see the impact of this. The behaviour support service has worked productively with the school and this has contributed to the improvements seen in behaviour. Teachers have had some productive visits to other schools to look at high quality teaching and more of these are planned. The local authority's decision to hold challenge and review meetings with you twice a term to monitor progress is sensible.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Anwar
Her Majesty's Inspector