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Janette Teague
Headteacher
Westfields Infant School
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Hampshire
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Dear Ms Teague

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Westfields Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 18 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.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated a range of documentation including the school action plan, information relating to the monitoring of teaching, reports from the local authority representative and some governing body minutes. You took me on a tour of the school and we made brief visits to all classes where I spoke to pupils about their work and looked at their books.

Main findings

Judgements made at the previous inspection were accepted by yourself and the governing body. You and your deputy headteacher are determined to drive improvements forward and have swiftly focused on appropriate actions. The school's improvement plan covers what needs to be improved and it clearly details what actions will be taken and how and when progress will be measured.

You have made changes to how teachers are expected to plan their lessons and as a result they are planning tasks that better meet a range of pupils' needs and which provide a more appropriate level of challenge. Activities are more defined and pupils are clearer about what they need to do to succeed. Teachers are required to carefully evaluate the impact of this planning on pupils' learning in order to continually improve their practice.

The development of pupils' handwriting skills is a key focus for improvement. You have reviewed and revised your handwriting policy and established clear expectations of practice across the school. Consequently pupils are given more frequent opportunities to engage in handwriting activities. Pupils are recording more of their written work on paper so their progress is easier for everyone to see. You are raising the profile and importance of these skills in a variety of ways, for example through displays of pupils' written work in each classroom and individual support for pupils who need extra support to improve their handwriting skills.

You have used a variety of methods to inspire boys to write. These have included building writing opportunities into a wide range of activities across the school, inviting a children's author into school to talk to pupils about their work and reviewing the planned writing topics to ensure they interest and engage boys. Consequently the gaps in achievement in writing between girls and boys are closing.

You have reviewed and revised the timetable of activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that pupils have more opportunities to learn in the outside environment. Resources and provision in these classrooms have also been improved so that there are clearly organised areas for different types of learning, for example art activities and mathematics. This means that pupils have a greater choice in learning activities using a wider range of materials.

As a result of the audit you have carried out, you have identified the gaps in mathematics resources available to teachers and you have provided a wider range of materials to support the teaching of mathematics. This helps teachers to draw on a range of teaching strategies in their lessons including problem solving approaches.

Subject leaders have been given a comprehensive and varied range of valuable support and training, including visits to good and outstanding local schools and

training from the local authority's adviser. As a result these subject leaders are developing a greater understanding of their role and formulating whole school plans for their areas of responsibility.

Governors have received useful training from the local authority in refining their role of checking the progress the school is making. A member of the governing body is now linked to each key area of the school's improvement plan in order to enhance the governors' understanding of the school's work. Governors are demonstrating a good understanding of their role in challenging and supporting the headteacher to achieve the targets that have been set.

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 provided a range of effective support. They have provided useful guidance to the headteacher in developing the school's improvement plan. Local authority advisers have given valuable support to subject leaders to strengthen their role and helped to develop the planning and assessment skills of classroom teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Lisa Moore

Her Majesty's Inspector