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27 March 2014

Mr Paul Walker
Executive Headteacher
Musbury Primary School
Church Hill
Musbury
Axminster
Devon
EX13 8BB

Dear Mr Walker

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Musbury Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27 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 taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- monitor teaching to ensure teachers provide challenging activities and have high expectations for pupils' progress
- feedback regularly to the federation's executive headteacher and governing body about the progress being made to improve teaching.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also met with you and the school's headteacher to review pupils' written work. I had a meeting with the Chair of the Governing Body and the Vice Chair, and a meeting with a representative of the local authority. The school action plan was evaluated. You gave me a brief tour of the school.

Context

Since the inspection in January 2014, a federation has been established between Musbury Primary School and Sidmouth Primary School. The headteacher of Sidmouth Primary School is the executive headteacher of both schools. A senior member of staff from Sidmouth Primary School is the teaching headteacher at Musbury Primary School. There are 14 pupils at the school. One teacher is on maternity leave, but she is intending to return after the Easter holiday. There is now one governing body for both schools in the federation. This includes two newly elected parents from Musbury Primary School. Following the Easter holiday period, the pupils will be taught mainly in two classes. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Key Stage 1 pupils will be taught in one class. The second class will be for the Key Stage 2 pupils.

Main findings

You have acted quickly to address the areas for improvement identified during the recent inspection. The school's action plan details precisely the work that needs to be done; so that the school is judged good when it is reinspected. Monthly checks are built into the action plan. You are determined to assess how rapidly the school is improving teaching and increasing the rate of learning.

The working relationship that exists between yourself and the new teaching headteacher has been instrumental in 'getting going' quickly. This is to be commended. Your expectations are very clear. At times, this has led you to have honest and challenging conversations with the headteacher. These focus on the issues of teaching the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in one class. The headteacher has taken on board your advice willingly. He is flexible, in the way he organises his teaching. He plans a curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage, as well as one that challenges the older pupils. What comes through is a keen sense of wanting to 'get it right' for the pupils.

Since the inspection pupils have more opportunities to write at length. Pupils also have individual targets. These arise from a more accurate analysis of assessment information. Targets are shared with the pupils, so that they are clearer about the

purpose of their learning. The teacher is increasingly planning work to challenge pupils' thinking.

The federation's governing body contains governors who are very experienced in providing support and challenge. Governors are well informed about the school's work. They have a clearly focused plan for improvement. They have set challenging performance targets for the school leaders. These are based on the school's rate of progress to be judged at least good when the school is re-inspected.

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 been instrumental in creating the federation between Musbury Primary School and Sidmouth Primary School. This has strengthened the leadership and governance at Musbury Primary School. Parents and the local community are beginning to feel more positive about the school's future. There are indications that the number of pupils attending is set to increase. The governors and the local authority will need to monitor the situation very carefully over the coming months.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Neech
Her Majesty's Inspector