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4 April 2014

Jo Luxon
Headteacher
St George's Community Primary School
Clarence Road
Portland
DT5 2BD

Dear Mrs Luxon,

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St George's Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 3 April 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:

- Regularly check teachers' individual 'teaching and learning action plans' to assess the impact of the actions taken to improve teaching and raise achievement.
- Make full use of this information to give feedback to teachers so that actions can be adapted or changed quickly and further challenging targets can be set.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and your deputy headteacher, your senior leadership team, representatives from the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority. The work of the school since the recent inspection and the school

improvement plans were evaluated. Together with your deputy headteacher we carried out brief visits to lessons.

Context

The deputy headteacher relinquished his class-based teaching commitment in January to focus on supporting the improvement of teaching throughout the school. A new member of the teaching staff will take up her post in Year 3 at the beginning of the summer term 2014.

Main findings

The work you have carried out since the inspection to secure consistently good teaching has already begun to show improved rates of progress for all pupils. You acknowledge the inspection was a catalyst that brought about an increased drive and commitment from staff and governors to raise pupils' attainment. To this end you have rightly focused on securing consistently good teaching as the main priority for improvement. You have successfully adapted the school development plan to include the recommendations made in the inspection report.

By completing a comprehensive audit of the quality of teaching and learning within the school you now have a clearer understanding of each teacher's strengths and areas for improvement. By providing teachers with an individual teaching and learning action plan you have successfully established a system to improve the quality of teaching as well as to track teachers' training and development. This ensures that you and your governors have a clear record of teachers' performance targets and the progress they are making towards achieving them. However, the school has not yet fully embedded a system to evaluate the impact of the actions taken so that plans can be changed quickly and, where necessary, further challenging targets for teacher's performance can be set.

You ensure teachers regularly reflect on the actions they have taken to strengthen their teaching. All staff now have a clearer understanding of what they need to do to promote pupils' better progress and achievement. For example, teachers are now marking pupils' work with more of a focus on pupils' next steps in learning and pupils are given time to reflect on their learning. Through the regular checks that now take place you are able to see that teachers' planning is much sharper and better suited to meet the learning needs of all pupils.

You are wisely drawing on the expertise of your most successful teachers and using them to coach and support colleagues who require additional support. For example, your middle leaders are now much more focused on leading improvement within their subject than before the inspection. You have directed more of their time to checking on the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Middle leaders say they appreciate the opportunity this had created for them to work more closely together in developing the quality of teaching and raising achievement.

Teaching assistants have received training to develop their questioning skills when working with pupils and this has helped them to focus more sharply on learning rather than just completing tasks. Further work is planned to strengthen provision for the most vulnerable pupils in the school.

External support

The local authority has provided timely support to the headteacher and other leaders. Time has been spent with the school on joint lesson observations, and working through the school improvement plans. A review of the structure and working practice of the governing body has been successfully completed. This has resulted in a new action plan for governors with clear priorities that are now closely aligned with the school improvement plan. As a result, governors are deepening their understanding of what they need to do to hold the school effectively to account and by when.

The school has drawn on the support and expertise offered by other headteachers in drafting the current school improvement plan. The middle leader responsible for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is also benefiting from regular support provided through the national 'Achievement for All' strategy. This has already led to a review of teaching assistants and how they are deployed.

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

Yours sincerely

David Edwards

Her Majesty's Inspector