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2 May 2014

Sue Leyman
Headteacher
Yeoford Community Primary School
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Dear Mrs Leyman,

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Yeoford Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 2 May 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 February 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.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and your head of school, your leader for mathematics across the federation and representatives from the Governing Body. I also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority and spoke to a small group of pupils. The work of the school since the recent inspection and the school improvement plans were evaluated. Together with your head of school we carried out brief visits to lessons.

Context

Since the inspection three members of the teaching staff have resigned. Two teachers left the school at the beginning of April. A third teacher will be leaving at

the end of the summer term. The current Chair of the Governing Body is in the process of handing over his responsibilities to another governor. A further two governors have resigned.

Main findings

Despite the significant changes to teaching personnel in recent months you have worked determinedly since the inspection to secure consistently good teaching throughout the school. This has already begun to show improved rates of progress for all pupils and particularly the most able. You acknowledge the inspection was the catalyst that has brought about an increased drive and commitment from all staff and governors to secure higher standards for pupils. You have successfully adapted the school development plan to include the recommendations made in the inspection report. For example, teachers are rightly focusing on securing consistently good teaching, especially in mathematics and ensuring the most able pupils are challenged in lessons to achieve more highly. Along with your senior leaders you are focusing more carefully on monitoring the quality of teaching and learning within the school. This is providing you and your governing body with a clearer understanding of each teacher's strengths and their development needs.

You are beginning to establish a clear record of teachers' performance targets and the progress they are making towards achieving them. These are now being carefully monitored by you to ensure the impact of any actions taken can be accurately understood and used to bring about the desired improvements in teaching and pupils' progress. You are very wisely drawing on the expertise of your most successful teachers from within the federation and using them to coach and support colleagues who require additional support. For example, senior leaders are working with colleagues to support early years practice and mathematics teaching. As a result, staff now have a clearer understanding of what they need to do to promote pupils' better progress and achievement. You have reviewed the way teachers mark pupils' work and have drawn on the expertise of other local schools to support you in this. Those pupils who spoke with me during my visit said they were now regularly given time to reflect on their learning and respond to their teachers' marking. They were confident in explaining how the marking of their work is helping them to better understand what they need to do to improve.

You have begun to work more closely with the school's local authority representative to check the quality of teaching within the school and to support middle leaders in developing their leadership roles. Middle leaders say they appreciate the opportunity this had created for them to work more closely together to raise pupils' achievement. Teaching assistants have also benefited from training through the federation to develop their subject and questioning skills when working with pupils and this has helped them to focus more sharply on supporting learning and pupils' progress. Further work is now planned to strengthen teaching provision for the most able pupils in the school.

External support

The school has drawn on the support and expertise offered by other headteachers within the local learning community and across the federation to draft the current school improvement plan. The local authority has provided timely support to the headteacher and other leaders. For example, time has been spent with the school on joint lesson observations, and working to sharpen the school improvement plan. A review of the structure and working practice of the governing body has been successfully completed. Governors say this has resulted in then having a much clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Their work is now closely aligned with the aims of the school improvement plan. A programme of training for all governors has begun to deepen their understanding of what they need to do to hold the school effectively to account. Governors are also benefiting from working closely with an outstanding governing body that has a similar federation structure to their own.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector