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Brenda Dalley
Headteacher
Hadleigh Infant and Nursery School
Bilton Road
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Benfleet
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Dear Mrs Dalley

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hadleigh Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 14 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 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:

- ensure that judgements made about teaching are based on all aspects including the marking of pupils work, progress information, the quality of pupils work and the observation of lessons
- improve the marking of mathematics so that pupils misconceptions are addressed more helpfully
- sharpen up some of the impact criteria in the action plan so it is quite explicit to all how success will be measured.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body and a representative from Essex Local Authority to discuss the

action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I visited all classes in the school to observe the teaching and learning.

Main findings

Following the inspection, the teaching and leadership of phonics has been strengthened. All pupils now benefit from structured lessons and are grouped according to ability. Teachers and teaching assistants have received training. Assessment information shows that standards are already rising and a much greater proportion of pupils are now at the expected level.

Teachers are subject to regular observations and they are receiving training to improve their practice, such as when marking books. The marking of writing is now much more useful. The marking of mathematics is not good enough to ensure that teachers tackle pupils misconceptions so that they make good progress. Teachers are trying to make sure work better meets the needs of all pupils, such as those who find it easy. They do not pay sufficient attention to linking the work in books when planning lessons. Consequently, in mathematics lessons some pupils are not sufficiently stretched to think and others are left with misunderstandings that are not addressed well enough.

Middle leaders are receiving training to strengthen their skills in their areas of responsibility. This is having an impact on school improvement. The phonic leader has led improvements to the curriculum, teaching and achievement in this subject. The special educational needs coordinator has led the strengthening of the work of teaching assistants who are making a better contribution to learning.

The school action plan rightly concentrates on the recommendations from the last inspection. In some aspects, such as the improvement required in phonics, it is quite clear how success will be measured. However, in others it is not. Improvements planned to teaching are judged on the quality of lessons observations without paying sufficient attention to the other aspects of teaching that need to be included to justify a good grade over time.

Governors continue to be effective and are applying the necessary pressure required to drive school improvement rapidly. They keep careful checks on the work of school leaders and rightly challenge the headteacher to ensure that the school gets back to good quickly.

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 school draws on the support from the local authority. This has been effective by facilitating the improvements to phonics and training staff to be able to teach better.

They have also been helpful in confirming what needs to improve so that teaching is judged to be good. They are eager to continue this work with the headteacher more regularly. The school improvement partner has been helpful in advising the headteacher about how she can strengthen the observation of lessons.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector