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3 June 2014

Mrs Trudy Sharred
Headteacher
Bluebell Primary School
Lovelace Road
Norwich
NR4 7DS

Dear Mrs Sharred

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bluebell Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 03 June 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 last section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- improve rates of attendance so that they are at least in line with the national average
- clearly define the roles of all leaders in checking the work of the school.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher. I also met with the Chair of the Governing Body and representatives from the local authority. I looked at pupils' books, in English and mathematics, and spoke to a group of pupils about their work. I evaluated the school's action plan and associated documents, reviewed information about pupils' progress and accompanied you on visits to all classes and the school's specialist resource base.

Context

Since the previous inspection the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator has left the school.

Main findings

Following the previous inspection you acted promptly to develop an action plan that sets out what the school needs to do to be judged as good at its next inspection. The plan rightly focuses on the improvements that need to be made to the quality of teaching and to the way in which senior leaders, including governors, monitor and evaluate the work of the school.

Since the inspection the school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching. The new deputy headteacher has worked in classes across the school to coach and improve others to become consistently good or better. Teachers have also had access to training and have been involved in the development of revised teaching and marking policies. There is some evidence that the actions that have been taken are already having a positive impact. The teaching of phonics has improved and, when planning lessons, teachers now focus on what pupils are expected to learn, rather than the tasks that they have to complete.

Systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning have improved. The process now includes regular observations of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning. Reports are produced and findings are fed back to staff and, where appropriate, the governing body. However, The precise role of all leaders within the school's cycle of monitoring and evaluation, has not been made explicit and currently too much responsibility falls on the headteacher.

The school is now using assessment information more effectively to hold teachers to account for the attainment and progress of their pupils. Senior leaders meet with teachers each term and together they undertake a review of each child's progress. This process is also helping the school to identify those pupils in need of additional support.

Recently the school has introduced a number of initiatives aimed at improving attendance. There has been a slight improvement, as a result, but attendance rates remain below the national average.

The recent review of governance recognised that the governing body is making a useful contribution to the strengthening of the overall effectiveness of the school. The Chair of the Governing Body knows the school well and is confident that once recent improvements have been consolidated the school will be judged as good.

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 provides a good level of support and challenge to the school. An intervention officer visits the school regularly to support developments and check on the progress being made. Teachers also have access to a wide range of courses provided by the local authority. The school also values the support it is receiving from governor services and human resources. Although the school remains a cause for concern to the local authority, recent improvements mean that its officers are confident that the school can achieve a good judgement at the next inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow
Her Majesty's Inspector