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Stevie Parkes
Huntingtree Primary School
Bournes Hill
Hasbury Estate
Halesowen
B63 4DZ

Dear Mrs Parkes

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Huntingtree Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 6 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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. The school should take further action to:

- follow up the training needs of governors as identified in the review of governance
- ensure that governors are clear about their statutory duties so that they can contribute effectively to the school's strategic direction.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the two deputy headteachers, the learning leaders for mathematics and English, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I also viewed pupils' books, records of pupils' progress, home-school diaries and subject action plans focusing on improvements to reading, writing and mathematics.

Context

There has been no significant change to staffing since the section 5 inspection, which judged the school to require improvement.

Main findings

You have worked quickly with the deputy headteachers and learning leaders in response to the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. You have established a purpose-driven culture so that all staff understand why changes are necessary and how they will be achieved. All leaders, managers and governors communicate a strong sense of ambition and determination to bring about the necessary improvements.

You have introduced a new system to track pupils' progress over time and offered training for all staff in its use. You have checked teachers' assessments of pupils' achievements and rates of progress. Teachers, managers and senior leaders have moderated each other's judgements. Groups of pupils who are not making sufficient progress are now identified quickly and additional, tailored support is provided. You regularly review these interventions so that successes can be built on and weaknesses remedied. The deputy headteachers and learning leaders gave detailed examples of pupils' increasing ability to accurately assess themselves and correctly determine their next steps. Detailed records of all pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics show increased proportions of pupils making accelerated progress.

The deputy headteachers have taken a strong and effective lead in supporting staff; identifying the necessary improvements; and taking steps to improve the quality of teaching overall. Policies have been reviewed and updated to ensure that all teachers are aware of the consistent systems, procedures and standards expected of them. You have provided additional time for teachers, including those who are newly qualified, to observe skilled teachers and share good practice. The learning leaders for English and mathematics provide regular support for individual members of staff with differing needs. They gather a range of evidence from lesson observations, pupils' books, pupil progress information and home-school diaries so that their support is planned for each teacher's specific needs. Aspects of teaching such as planning for purposeful learning, providing informative feedback and developing questioning techniques are supported, monitored and checked. Learning leaders provide carefully targeted support to improve teacher's subject knowledge so they are more able to overcome pupils' barriers to learning. Immediate feedback is provided and development points are checked. Your records show that this course of action has not only strengthened the quality of teaching but also improved the pupils' rates of progress. Teachers, managers, leaders and governors are all acutely aware of the link between the quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve. As a consequence, there is a strong sense of accountability and responsibility.

Learning leaders and deputy headteachers check that reading, writing and mathematics are planned with sufficient breadth so that pupils acquire the necessary knowledge. Leaders regularly work with individual teachers to ensure that lesson activities include open-ended tasks, investigations and problem solving and provide opportunities for writing for different purposes. Resources have been purchased to encourage older pupils to read more widely. Ongoing support and checks establish clear and shared expectations and help to identify follow-up training requirements.

The school development plan is a working document which addresses the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. Individual actions are suitably specific. Those staff responsible for taking the lead for any action are clearly identified. Expected improvements are identified and linked with measurable outcomes. Governors have created a new committee to monitor the school's improvement. A review of governance has begun and a report is expected in the very near future. Although governors have received some recent training they will plan a more detailed programme of development in response to the review.

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 representative knows the school well and has been both supportive and responsive to the needs of leaders and managers. She reported on learning leaders' significant skills in providing speedy and knowledgeable support for individual teachers. Training has been provided for governors and a National Lead for Governance has been commissioned.

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

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway

Her Majesty's Inspector