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Ms Sue Finch
Headteacher
Westminster Community Primary School
John Street
Ellesmere Port
Cheshire
CH65 2ED

Dear Ms Finch

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Westminster Community Primary School, Cheshire West and Chester

Following my visit to your school on 3 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 recent section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the chair and eight members of the governing body. A telephone call was held with a representative of the local authority regarding their support for the school. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Documents summarising other actions taken since the section 5 inspection were also examined. A learning walk of the school was undertaken with the headteacher. Pupils' exercise books were scrutinised.

Context

Since the last inspection a new deputy headteacher has taken up post.

Main findings

Data is now used more confidently to assess progress and plan learning activities. Staff know their pupils, their learning needs and what is required to enable further improvement. Data on pupil progress is better focused and more accessible for both teaching staff and governors. Strategic and improvement planning have been sharpened so that strengths and areas for improvement are clear as are the ways and means to sustain and achieve them. Phonics provision has been re-organised. The most recent school generated data suggests that smaller phonics groups and sharper curriculum organisation are having an impact and pupil progress is accelerating. A whole school programme on 'How to be a good learner' has been introduced. This programme is aimed at enabling pupils to become focused, keen, determined, organised and well-behaved learners. Classrooms are festooned with symbols and pupils' work around these learning skills. There is now a more productive whole school approach to the development of reading, writing and mathematics. School tracking and monitoring systems indicate that pupils are making better progress in reading, writing, phonics and mathematics.

Staff work well with senior leaders and each other to develop ideas that enhance their teaching and pupils' learning activities. The appointment of a permanent deputy headteacher has strengthened the capacity of leadership to promote and embed improvement. Everyone in the school is working in a more focused and collective manner to bring about and sustain improvement. Senior leaders regularly conduct learning walks and exercise book scrutinies and offer precise comments on improvement planning.

Governors are highly committed and very keen to improve their practice and scrutiny of the school's performance. Governors have re-organised their meeting schedules to better reflect key school attainment and progress data collection dates and quality assurance reports. Governors are undertaking an extensive training programme to better understand attainment and progress data and other aspects of governance. As a consequence, governors are improving their understanding of attainment and progress data and ways to judge the quality of teaching and learning. Links have been established between individual governors and subject leaders.

I have asked the headteacher to include in the improvement plan key milestones so that the impact of actions can be measured and checked against targets to ascertain on-going progress. This will offer senior and middle leaders periodic opportunities to reflect on and evaluate progress made and where progress is not accelerating as expected, to take the necessary measures to ensure it does. I have also recommended that the school reflects further on how best to stretch and challenge the more able students and integrate such strategies into the school monitoring timetable and 'how to be a good learner' programme.

External support

The local authority is committed to supporting the school in aiding its improvement planning and practice. It has worked with the school to arrange additional professional development for staff in mathematics. The school has established good networks locally to support the development of best practice.

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, the Director of Children's Services for Cheshire West and Chester.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Geraghty

Her Majesty's Inspector