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11 June 2014

Ms Paylor Sutton
Headteacher
Langdon Primary School
East Langdon
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Dear Ms Paylor Sutton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Langdon Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 11 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 March 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:

- help governors focus on the information that will show them whether more pupils are making more progress than expected
- secure the support of a National Leader of Education to help you to check that teaching and learning is improving quickly enough
- attend Ofsted's Better English conference and Getting to Good seminar to help improve teaching and strengthen leadership.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and your Key Stage 1 teacher, three members of the governing body and your school improvement adviser to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. We walked around the classrooms and I evaluated the schools' improvement plan. I looked at a range of documents that you provided for me which included information about pupils' progress, notes of visits from the school improvement adviser, minutes of governing body meetings and records of the school's lesson observations and training.

Context

Since the last section 5 inspection the two office staff have left. A replacement has very recently taken up post. One teaching assistant is on long-term sickness leave.

Main findings

You have worked with the school improvement adviser to develop an appropriate action plan to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The plan includes the right priorities and information about what the school expects to achieve at key points on its improvement journey.

The school has a plethora of data about pupils' progress and standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This is shared regularly with governors, who ask relevant and challenging questions. However, some of the information provided is not helpful to them. For example, averaging the points of progress for a year group can mask unacceptable differences in the progress of individual pupils, particularly when the numbers in each year group are small. Information about the proportions of pupils who make expected and more than expected progress is more useful but not easy for governors to find or use well to know whether sufficient improvements are being made.

Checks on the quality of teaching and learning have not been systematic or regular since the last inspection. You were distracted from this vital leadership work when the school was without office staff. As a consequence, the quality of teaching has not improved as quickly or consistently across the school as you expected. A timetable of activities to check on the quality of teaching and learning in the summer term has been drawn up but not shared with governors. They are unclear about the frequency and rigour of the monitoring of teaching.

You know that more needs to be done to make up for the time that was lost and appropriate actions are beginning to be taken. An additional part-time teacher has been appointed for September to help accelerate the progress that pupils make in Key Stage 2. After-school writing classes and specific, daily handwriting lessons are

taking place. Teachers look at pupils' books together to make sure there is a consistent approach to teaching spelling, punctuation and grammar. This is beginning to make a difference and some pupils are taking more care in the presentation of their work.

Relevant support and training to help teacher improve their classroom skills have been planned. Joint lesson observations with your school improvement adviser have assured you that you can accurately identify the strengths and areas that teachers need to develop further. However, improvement steps have not been recorded clearly or followed up with sufficient rigour to make sure that teachers always act on the advice and training they are given. Guidance from a National Leader of Education could help you to give sufficient time to checking that teachers are putting what they learn into practice and support you to take action if teaching is not improving quickly enough. Teachers' performance targets have not been amended since the section 5 inspection to help them understand more precisely what is expected.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. I will visit briefly again in the autumn to check how effectively leadership actions have improved teaching and learning.

External support

The school improvement adviser is visiting more regularly and has provided some useful help to develop an appropriate action plan. The local collaborative of schools is funding a consultant and support from an Advanced Skills Teacher has been secured to work with teachers. Visits to other schools are being arranged so that teachers can see effective practitioners at work. Relevant external support is rightly focused on improving teaching but you need to make sure actions are followed up rigorously if it is going to help the school to improve to good.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Corporate Director of Education, Learning and Skills for Kent.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Krafft
Her Majesty's Inspector