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23 June 2014

Louise Coates
Headteacher
East Tilbury Junior School
Princess Margaret Road
East Tilbury
RM18 8SB

Dear Mrs Coates

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to East Tilbury Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 20 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:

- accelerate progress in mathematics of pupils in Year 6 and develop the writing skills of those pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs in Year 3.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and other senior leaders, 12 pupils from Key Stage 2, the Chair and four other members of the governing body, the Director of Children's Services for Thurrock, your school improvement partner and the Chief Executive Officer of St Clare's Co-operative Academy Trust to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school action plan and scrutinised your record of recruitment checks of staff. I visited every class briefly, accompanied by you and the two deputy headteachers, to speak to pupils about their work and look at the work in their books.

Context

You plan to amalgamate with East Tilbury Infant School in September 2014. You have secured a full complement of teaching staff for September 2014, five of which will be newly qualified teachers. You are currently piloting an enquiry-based curriculum in Year 5.

Main findings

Your school action plan, updated regularly, clearly conveys your ambitions for securing rapid progress against the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. You have identified key times during the year when you measure the effectiveness of your school improvement activities and can already demonstrate the impact of many of the actions you have taken.

You have eradicated inadequate teaching through your decisive action and you are working well with teachers whose practice is not yet consistently good. You are using a wider range of information to build up individual profiles of teachers, taking into account pupils' outcomes, observation of teaching, scrutiny of pupils' work including marking. You are also having discussions with pupils themselves to gain their views on the quality of teaching they receive. The quality of marking I saw in pupils' books has improved and teachers' marking is helping pupils to correct misconceptions and to move up to the next level of attainment. Older pupils are working well with younger pupils, especially in improving their presentation and in getting younger pupils to respond more meaningfully to their teachers' written comments.

You have produced action plans for literacy and numeracy. Your current data indicate that while pupils are making gains in their learning, not enough pupils in Year 6 are making the expected progress in mathematics, and not enough pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs are making sufficient progress in writing in Year 3. However, there has clearly been a greater emphasis on developing pupils' writing skills across the school, and I saw some impressive examples of writing displayed around the school and in pupils' books. You are aware that there is still work to be done in strengthening pupils' writing skills across all areas of the curriculum.

You have worked well with teachers and learning support assistants to deepen their understanding of how pupils learn, and have delivered appropriate training and support. Consequently, the quality of teaching is improving, and it is clear that your newly qualified teachers are in a position to enhance their skills from the effective practice that already exists in the school.

The governing body has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and monitors progress against your action plan regularly.

Scrutiny of minutes of governors' meetings shows they present an appropriate level of support and challenge.

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 has supported the school well by working with teachers whose practice is not consistently good, and has worked with leaders to develop the teaching of reading and writing skills. The Trust monitors the progress the school is making through its Progress Board, and an independent School Improvement Partner has worked well with the school to review progress, particularly with regard to the quality of teaching. The Trust has supported you effectively by providing opportunities for you to share good practice by meeting regularly with other headteachers within the Trust network.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Thurrock and the Department for Education – Academies Advisers Unit.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell
Her Majesty's Inspector