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Mrs Angela Young
Headteacher
Keep Hatch Primary School
Ashridge Road
Wokingham
RG40 1PG

Dear Mrs Young

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Keep Hatch Primary 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 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.

This 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. Leaders should take further action to:

- sharpen the action plan so it includes measurable outcomes for pupils and demonstrates clearly who is responsible for monitoring and evaluating how well the outcomes for pupils are met.
- establish a comprehensive system to present and analyse information gathered from pupils' assessments.

The local authority should take further action to:

- establish links with experienced and successful leaders of similar schools, to improve the skills and expertise of existing senior and middle leaders.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you, two members of the governing body, including the Chair, and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also evaluated the school's action plan. I scrutinised other school documentation including records of leaders' monitoring activity and information about pupils' progress and attainment. I joined you on a tour of the school and visited every class, taking the opportunity to chat to pupils and look at their work.

Context

The deputy headteacher is retiring at the end of the summer term. Governors have appointed a new deputy headteacher from a local academy, graded outstanding by Ofsted, to start in September. A teacher in Year 4 has been absent since half term. This class is taught by a temporary teacher for three days a week and by the headteacher and deputy headteacher for the other two days. One class teacher left in April and a new class teacher, with responsibility for Year 2, started in May. In order to create additional leadership time for a team leader, governors have appointed a newly qualified teacher to start in September.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection, leaders have monitored more closely the quality of teaching. Leaders now undertake a variety of monitoring activities regularly, including lesson observations and looking at pupils' work. Leaders have refined how they provide feedback to teachers. Additionally, staff meetings and training have focused on specific areas identified at the previous inspection. This is helpful to teachers as they are receiving detailed and regular guidance on how to improve their skills and expertise. Mid-year reviews of teachers' performance have been usefully developed to better hold teachers to account and to identify training needs. Despite this, leaders are not linking performance and pay effectively. As a result targets set for teachers who receive additional pay for leadership responsibilities are not yet demanding enough.

You have made well-judged changes to the way teachers plan lessons. There is a greater emphasis on providing more challenging activities for pupils. Walking around the school, I saw how pupils are keen to choose and tackle more challenging work. As a result they find tasks more engaging and rewarding. I know you were disappointed with some of the marking and feedback we saw in pupils' books. You recognise that too often marking was irregular and feedback to pupils was insufficient. As a result, you plan to revisit the marking policy with all staff and redouble your expectations.

You have made well-judged improvements to the teaching of reading. Pupils now have regular opportunities to participate in guided reading groups. They are more confident when using the school's 'SPIQ' approach – summarise, predict, identify and question. This has particularly helped pupils in Key Stage 2 develop their understanding of higher order questions and retrieve relevant information from texts. During the visit, pupils were clearly enjoying these sessions and developing their reading skills effectively.

Team leaders are developing their leadership skills well. They now meet with teachers regularly to discuss the progress that pupils are making. They identify pupils who are making slow progress and take prompt action. As a result, pupils are receiving timely support to help them make better progress. Senior leaders are routinely gathering information about how well pupils are achieving. However, the way that leaders present and analyse information about pupils' progress is underdeveloped. As a result, leaders and governors are unclear how well groups of learners, including those pupils with special educational needs, are progressing or the standards they are achieving.

The previous inspection judgement was disappointing to leaders. Despite this, governors and senior leaders are committed to improving the school. You have revised the improvement plan and scheduled appropriate actions. Although you have a clear understanding of which aspects need to be improved, you acknowledge there has been a slow start. This is because the plan does not provide a clear enough pathway for governors, leaders and teachers. It is unclear who is leading different aspects and who will evaluate the impact of actions. You should now strengthen the plan to include appropriate timescales. This will help senior leaders and governors set a clear and sequential trajectory to ensure the school improves more rapidly.

Governors are very committed to improving the school and making necessary changes. They have made astute use of training opportunities, including those provided by the local authority. As a result, governors' skills and expertise are improving rapidly. Governors are now able to ask challenging questions and consequently are holding leaders to account more effectively. Governors have increased their direct involvement making appropriate visits to the school to check on the quality of information they receive. Governors are keen to redraft the school improvement plan so that their monitoring activities are clearly identifiable and include measurable targets related to how well pupils are learning.

Ofsted will carry out further visits, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. HMI will return to the school next term to offer further support, particularly to address how well leaders are presenting and using the information they gather from pupils' assessments.

External support

The local authority has provided beneficial training for governors about school improvement planning. A local authority officer helpfully attended a meeting with parents following the previous inspection. However, the local authority agrees that senior leaders would benefit from additional support, particularly when presenting and analysing school information about pupils' assessments. The local authority representative is now much clearer about the type of support you require.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Farr
Her Majesty's Inspector