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Mrs Deirdre Devine
Headteacher
Shaw-cum-Donnington C.E. Primary School
Love Lane
Donnington
Newbury
Berkshire
RG14 2JG

Dear Mrs Devine

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Shaw-cum-Donnington C.E. Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 July 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2013. 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:

- ensure that more pupils make better progress and attain higher levels in writing
- insist that all teachers follow the school's marking policy so that pupils know their next steps
- accelerate the progress of those pupils eligible for extra support through the pupil premium so that they are able to attain higher levels in all subjects and catch up with their peers.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the co-ordinator for mathematics and three members of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also had a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner. You accompanied me on a tour of the school to visit all classes and I looked at a sample of pupils' books. I evaluated recent school documentation relating to the school improvement plan, the monitoring of teaching and the minutes of Governing Body meetings. I scrutinised the most recent results for end of Key Stage assessments and information about pupils' current progress and attainment.

Context

One member of the senior leadership team is currently absent from the school. There are several staff changes planned for the autumn term: four teachers are leaving the school, all of whom are part-time. The vacant posts will be filled by a new teacher who has been appointed to start in September and the co-ordinator for special educational needs who will be returning from maternity leave.

Main findings

You are now leading the school with greater confidence and your courageous and determined approach has led to significant improvements in pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. In particular, pupils' achievement in mathematics has improved in all year groups and is now broadly in line with pupils' achievement in reading. It is especially pleasing that pupils' results in mathematics at Key Stage 1 show no gap between those pupils eligible for extra funding through the pupil premium and other pupils. Pupils' progress in writing is less secure, with some groups of pupils and some year groups lagging behind. The school's end of Key Stage 2 results for grammar, punctuation and spelling are disappointing and indicate a need for renewed focus on improving pupils' writing.

Through sustained and forensic monitoring of teaching, including lesson observations, scrutinies of teachers' planning, reviews of teachers' marking and evaluation of the half-termly assessments, you have ensured that teaching is improving. You are not afraid to challenge underperformance and are scrupulous about maintaining high standards day-to-day. Teachers know that you are checking the quality of their work closely, but also that you will ensure that they have training opportunities to inspire and support them. Teachers now prepare thoroughly and with a greater sense of responsibility for the regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress. Where there have been shortfalls in teachers' performance, you have followed careful programmes of support and challenge, following the school and local performance management procedures.

Since the last monitoring inspection teachers have improved their classroom environments, ensuring that displays support learning and are used effectively by pupils. There is greater consistency from class to class: pupils are clearer about what they are going to learn and what they need to do to achieve their targets. Pupils are stimulated by interesting activities to capture their imagination. For example, following a school visit, pupils made good use of their mathematical skills in a well-planned and interesting series of measuring, calculating and problem solving activities. Teachers' marking is improving and during the inspection I saw examples of pupils in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 responding promptly to their teachers' comments and taking action to improve their writing. However, the quality of marking is not consistent across the school and some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable because they are not sure what their next steps are.

The assessment of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is now sharper and more detailed. Children's learning journals show comprehensive evidence of their good progress and demonstrate that adult-led and child-initiated activities are promoting strong habits for learning and developing children's curiosity.

School leaders and governors are working hard with parents to ensure that learning is supported more successfully at home and that any lingering parental concerns are allayed. You are keen to raise the profile of the school in the local community.

Governors share your increased sense of confidence and direction. They now understand what they should be looking for when evaluating the school's work. They are in a better position to challenge school leaders because of the thorough and accessible information you provide. Governors can demonstrate their better understanding of pupils' achievement data and the profile of teaching in the school and judge how these relate to your monitoring of teachers' performance. Governors contribute effectively to the cycle of reviewing the school action plan and your self-evaluation. One governor now has particular responsibility for monitoring the school's use of the pupil premium funding and is able to evaluate the school's decisions about how the money is spent and its impact on pupils' progress. Governors take every opportunity to attend relevant training.

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 school has made the most of the support offered from the local authority. A well-planned range of support has been provided, including a school improvement advisor, who has guided you with monitoring teaching. A school improvement partner also provides mentoring support and has helped you enhance your day-to-day leadership skills. Specialist support with improving achievement in mathematics

has been particularly valuable. Similarly active support with improving pupils' achievement in writing would be of benefit to the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce

Her Majesty's Inspector