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Jayne Pavitt
Grange Park Junior School
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Dear Mrs Parvitt

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Grange Park Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 9 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 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:

- strengthen the action plan by including short-term milestones and measurable success criteria so that the school's leaders can judge the impact of each priority for improvement at specific points of time
- identify more clearly the role of governors in monitoring and evaluating the success of each action
- clearly identify the external support being commissioned to drive improvements in the action plan.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, and the Chair of the Governing Body who is a National Leader of Governance (NLG). I spoke with the Principal of Westfield Academy. I met with a group of teachers, the shadow literacy coordinator and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. You joined me in making visits to lessons and we scrutinised pupils' work. I evaluated the school's action plan and examined other relevant documentation.

Context

Since the last inspection, you have appointed two acting phase leaders, a shadow literacy coordinator and a shadow mathematics coordinator. Nine new teachers have been appointed to replace teachers who are leaving at the end of this academic year. The school has appointed a new Vice Chair of the Governing Body and two co-opted governors. You are also considering whether to revise the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team in light of the inspection findings. An educational psychologist is now working with the school and a new site manager has been appointed.

Main findings

The school's action plan clearly states the priorities to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The actions and deadlines are ambitious and realistic. Different members of staff are identified to implement, monitor and evaluate the impact of each action. However, it is not clear how leaders and the governors will judge the impact of these actions in the short, medium and long term. The role of the governing body to check and evaluate the success of the changes you are making is not evident. Furthermore, it is not clear how you will ensure the support given to staff is to be managed so it is not duplicated.

You have provided training for teachers and learning support assistants to improve the way they question pupils during lessons. They now check pupils' understanding better and challenge pupils to think more deeply about their work. You have also recently created ten core questions for teachers to use during lessons. These are helping teachers to ask pupils to explain their learning and encourage pupils to think about whether they and their peers really understand their work. Your monitoring of teaching and information about pupils' progress indicate these changes are improving the impact of teachers' questioning on pupils' learning.

You are beginning to improve how teachers set tasks and activities for pupils of different abilities. Teachers' plans for English and mathematics lessons include a section to remind them to set challenging work which is appropriate for more able pupils. Teachers are beginning to be better able to use pupil performance information to match the work they set to pupils' needs. This is especially for those

pupils who are at risk of falling short of their progress targets and those eligible for the pupil premium funding. You have audited the quality of writing in Years 3 to 6 and used the information to create a writing checklist which outlines the features that you expect teachers to use. This is starting to improve pupils' writing standards.

Nonetheless, there is still more to be done to sustain improvements to pupils' writing skills. Teachers do not always link the written work pupils' are expected to complete with their ability. This means many pupils, especially the most able, do not consistently produce high quality written work. You recognise the need to hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make, especially in writing but also in mathematics. From September 2014, teachers in Years 3 to 5 will teach mathematics and English to their own class and will be directly accountable for the progress made by pupils in their class for all subjects.

The Chair of the Governing Body is using his expertise to quickly improve the effectiveness of governance. Governors have been trained to better understand their roles and improve their skills to hold leaders to account. The school has recruited a Vice Chair, who is an experienced governor, and you have filled the vacant governor posts. Governors have created a teaching and learning committee to monitor and evaluate leaders' impact to improve the school. The Chair is supporting you to create a link with the Westfield Academy, which is a good school. You are also using tried and tested external consultants which he has recommended to support leaders and teachers to implement the school's action plan. Minutes from governing body meetings show that they question you about the reasons behind the initiatives you are introducing and the expected impact on pupils' achievement.

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 uses a combination of external consultants, staff from Westfield Academy and the local authority to support leaders, teachers and governors to implement improvements. From September 2014, a consultant will be working with the school to improve the quality of teaching. During the next academic year, you are increasing the amount of support the school receives from Westfield Academy to implement quickly the changes required for the school to become a good school.

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

Yours sincerely

Pamela Fearnley
Her Majesty's Inspector