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Alayne Clowes
Bordesley Village Primary School and Children's Centre
Emmeline Street
Bordesley Village
Birmingham
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Dear Mrs Clowes

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bordesley Village Primary School and Children's Centre

Following my visit to your school on 2 October 2014 with Mark Capel, associate inspector, 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. Please pass on my thanks to everyone who gave of their time to meet me and share their views of the progress the school is making.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in July 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

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:

- make the targets in the plan for improvement more clear and specific, so that they reflect what is needed for the school's overall effectiveness to be judged good
- make sure that leaders of mathematics, English and of provision for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs have information about pupils' attainment and progress in their subjects at their fingertips and use it to determine exactly what needs to be done to boost pupils' progress and raise achievement to good

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher, subject leaders for mathematics and English, the coordinator of provision for pupils who have special educational needs, the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school's improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

Five new members of teaching staff, including three newly qualified teachers, started work at Bordesley Village in September.

Main findings

You and the staff and governors understand the reasons that the school was judged to require improvement for a second time. Nevertheless, improvements had been made and these are highlighted in the inspection report. You have not wasted time in beginning to tackle remaining weaknesses. For example, you quickly provided support and guidance for the leadership of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The leader has already taken steps to strengthen procedures and to inform teachers of changes to practice. You have also implemented new initiatives to boost attendance and to further improve the quality of teaching.

Your action plan covers the three areas highlighted in the inspection report as needing improvement. You have set out in some detail the actions that will be taken in each aspect. The actions are appropriate. The plan makes clear that speeding up the progress made by pupils, including those who have special educational needs, is the prime purpose. You have also set 'milestones' for pupils' progress for each term so that the rate of forward momentum can be checked. You are intending to measure the progress all pupils make across the school this year in terms of average points. We discussed whether this is appropriate for pupils not in Years 2 or 6, who are following the new national curriculum. You intend to keep this under review as you move towards assessment without National Curriculum levels. Average points scores do not tell the whole story and can mask underperformance. It would be useful to supplement the milestones with targets expressed in terms of the proportion of the pupils in Year 6 who will make or exceed the progress expected of them.

The target for good or better teaching in the plan is 90%. However, the criteria for good teaching in the *School Inspection Handbook* direct inspectors to look for teaching that is 'consistently good'. This is because teaching is judged by its impact on pupils' learning and progress over time. Your target should be revised to reflect this.

In addition, the target for the progress of pupils who have special educational needs is not clearly spelled out in the plan. 'Accelerated progress' is not specific enough to help you and governors make an accurate judgement of whether progress is good enough when you check the impact of the actions taken.

You and other leaders have already begun to carry out monitoring activities. This has been done robustly and has highlighted some inconsistencies in practice that need to be ironed out as quickly as possible. For example, you have found that not all pupils are clear about their targets in English and mathematics. Similarly, a review of the learning environments indicates many positive features, but also shows that not all classes have targets for pupils' learning clearly displayed in accordance with your agreed way of doing things.

Middle leaders share the ambition to get to good as quickly as possible and are supporting and guiding their colleagues. However, they are not readily able to say how many pupils are on track to make the progress they should by the end of Year 6 or what they are aiming for in terms of pupils' attainment. This means that their inputs may not be targeted as precisely as they could be.

The governing body's scrutiny committee is a useful means of checking on progress towards the targets for pupils' learning.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. I would be grateful if you could provide me with copies of your reports to the governing body, so that I can keep up to date with how things are progressing, especially with regards to the progress of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs.

External support

You are drawing on support from external partners such as a local primary school and from independent consultants for literacy and numeracy in order to improve teaching and learning. You also seek support from other sources to enhance the school's environment and to engage parents and the local community.

The local authority has commissioned a teaching school to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities on its behalf. The school's progress will be reviewed every half term and the outcomes reported to the local authority.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda McGill
Her Majesty's Inspector