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Marie Curtis
Headteacher
Ash Grange Primary School
Ash Church Road
Aldershot
GU12 6LX

Dear Mrs Curtis

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ash Grange Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 October 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 second 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 section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. With you, I visited all classrooms, talked to pupils and looked at the work in their books. I also reviewed the school's single central record of staff vetting checks.

Context

Since the last inspection, one full time teacher has joined the school in Year 5 and two new part time teachers are now teaching in reception class.

Main findings

You have rightly strengthened your focus on the quality of teaching, which is improving steadily, and teachers now have a clearer understanding of how to move forward. Most, but not all teachers now provide more interesting and challenging work which better meets the needs of all pupils. Marking and feedback is also getting better, although this remains as you know, a work in progress.

As a result, the Year 6 pupils who left in July made better progress over the year, from low starting points, than they had in previous years. Nevertheless they missed their targets and their achievement was too variable overall. There were improvements in writing, where all Year 6 pupils made expected progress over Key Stage 2, set against continuing weaker achievement in mathematics. Your sharp analysis of these results has rightly led you to prioritise the work on mathematics, and on weaker areas in their writing such as writing at length, tackling harder questions and spelling correctly. Pupils' progress across the school more widely is improving steadily; most year groups made better than expected progress last year. You are aware the achievement of current Year 6 pupils remains a concern and are tackling this robustly.

As a result of your drive to improve the work of teaching assistants, this team have demonstrated an impressive commitment to their own development. They have all now gained level 1 qualifications, and are working towards level 2. This is reflected in classrooms where teaching assistants now support and challenge pupils much more effectively.

You are sensibly focusing on improving English and mathematics as a priority. Governors noted that the development of foundation subject leaders is not yet underway. It is good to see that work on this is planned for the spring term with the support of the local authority.

The governors' external review has taken place and governors found this a useful process. The smaller governing body is more sharply focused on key areas for school improvement, and useful training since my last visit is encouraging governors to challenge the school more deeply. They have worked quickly with you to devise a well-targeted improvement plan.

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 support and challenge offered by the local authority has improved significantly since my last visit. The school has benefited from a number of useful visits by the

Leadership Partner. In addition, the local authority is providing much needed training with a focus on improving literacy and mathematics teaching. It is too early to gauge the impact of this work.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Anwar
Her Majesty's Inspector