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6 November 2014

Christopher Ludlow  
Headteacher  
Blakeley Heath Primary School  
Sytch Lane  
Wombourne  
Wolverhampton  
WV5 0JR

Dear Mr Ludlow

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Blakeley Heath Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 5 November 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 December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. In June 2014, the school had another section 5 inspection and was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- ensure that the school improvement plan contains measurable targets related to the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils so that leaders can check the impact of actions taken and know whether the school is on track to be 'good' within the timescale set
- urgently act upon the recommendations identified in the recent review of governance and ensure that governors have the skills and information necessary to hold leaders to account for the school's performance

- present information about pupils' achievement to governors clearly so that they can easily compare the school's performance to the requirements for 'good' achievement in the inspection handbook
- urgently act upon the recommendations identified in the recent review of the school's use of pupil premium funding and ensure that funding is used effectively to improve the achievement of eligible pupils.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. HMI also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority and met with a group of pupils. A range of documentation was reviewed including written feedback to staff following checks on their work and the latest information about pupils' achievement. The school improvement plan was evaluated. You joined HMI on brief visits to classrooms to review pupils' learning and talk to pupils.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection there has been a review of governance and a review of the school's use of pupil premium funding. The Vice Chair of the Governing Body has recently resigned. Four governors have left and two new governors have joined the governing body. Governors have appointed a new deputy headteacher.

## **Main findings**

Since my previous monitoring inspection in July 2013, the pace of change has been too slow. As a result, the outcome of the most recent section 5 inspection in June 2014 came as a disappointment to you, the staff and the governing body. This is not to say that you have not been working hard and taking actions. However, you are not rigorously checking whether the actions have been successful. The school improvement plans do not contain measurable targets related to the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils. This means that leaders do not know whether the school is on track to be 'good' within the timescale set. This issue was raised as a point for further action at the monitoring inspection in July 2013. It has not been addressed quickly enough. This has hindered the pace of improvement.

Following the most recent inspection in June 2014, the local authority commissioned a review of governance. Governors have engaged fully and professionally with this. The report provides clear recommendations. Governors are using the recommendations to write an action plan. They have restructured committees in order to streamline and improve their effectiveness. A governors' working party has been formed to further support and challenge the school.

Governors are aware that they do not have a full understanding of the information on pupils' achievement. The local authority is providing effective support and training

to address this. This issue was raised as a point for action in July 2013. It has not been addressed quickly enough. This has hindered the pace of progress.

The headteacher presents governors with accurate information about pupils' achievement. However, the information is not presented in a way that clearly compares pupils' achievement in school with the requirements for 'good' achievement in the inspection handbook. This makes it harder for governors to judge the school's progress towards 'good' in this important aspect.

You and other senior leaders have recently refined the systems you use to record pupils' achievement. The system is now tracking pupils' progress from their different starting points. You are using this information effectively to help you to gain an accurate picture of the quality of teaching over time. Your written feedback to teachers is clear and identifies the precise actions that they need to take to improve the impact of teaching on different groups of pupils. Work in pupils' books shows that more pupils are making better progress and working at the standards expected for their age. However, there remains variability across classes and for different groups of pupils. You recognise that there is still more work to do to further improve the impact of teaching on the achievement of all groups of pupils' in all classes.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding has recently been undertaken. The report was received during the same week as this monitoring inspection. As a result, actions have not yet been taken to address the recommendations. I will visit again to provide further support and challenge to the school before its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

Since the previous HMI monitoring inspection, the level of support provided by the local authority has not been effective. Local authority review meetings have not kept a close watch on the school's progress or challenged school leaders to keep focused and ensure rapid improvement. Recent changes have been made. These include regular visits from the Commissioning Manager for School Improvement and regular support for the governing body. It is too early to judge the impact of this.

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

Yours sincerely

Marilyn Mottram

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

Cc. Chair of the Governing Body

Cc. Local authority