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Jane Attwood
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Attwood

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Leighterton Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 20 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other leaders and members of the Governing Body including the Chair, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also met with a representative of the local authority. I undertook a focused tour of the school, looked at a range of English and mathematics books and teachers' planning. I held discussions informally with pupils and staff. I reviewed the school improvement plan. I looked at the single central record to ensure appropriate checks have been made for all new staff.

Context

Since the last section 5 inspection, in June 2014, there have been a number of changes to the teaching staff and to the governing body. Following a recent internal review of governance, the governing body has been restructured. A newly appointed clerk to the governors took up post in September. Two newly appointed teachers took up their posts in September. Two teachers have returned from maternity leave.

Main findings

You have made a good start in driving forward the changes needed to improve the school. In discussions and meetings held during this monitoring visit, there was clear determination from all to enable the school to improve quickly. You have 'hit the ground running' at the start of this year. You have observed teaching in every class since the start of term. This has highlighted the strengths and weaknesses in teachers' practices. You have implemented a set of 'non-negotiable' expectations in mathematics for teachers to ensure their practice is more consistent. These include planning targeted questions to assess pupils' understanding and deepen their learning further. Teachers have embraced these changes. They are working together effectively as a team, and sharing good practice in weekly meetings. This is helping to improve the quality of teaching quickly.

The school action plan makes clear the improvements that need to be made. It is detailed and specific and shared with staff and governors. You are training subject leaders, new to their roles, to become increasingly knowledgeable about the progress pupils are making. With your support, leaders now check pupils' progress in English and mathematics each term. Teachers are setting more challenging targets for pupils' learning. This has raised their expectations of what all pupils can achieve. There is now a much greater focus on the achievement of different groups of pupils. As a result, the needs of all pupils are being evaluated and met more effectively.

You have implemented a sharper focus on the planning of lessons. Teachers now routinely plan lessons which challenge pupils and demonstrate that there is 'no cap on their learning'. They prepare activities to stretch pupils of all abilities, including the most able. All pupils are then given further opportunities and tasks to extend their learning. This is enabling pupils to make faster progress, particularly in mathematics.

Teachers' marking is frequent and helpful. All teachers are using the marking and feedback policy consistently, including those new to the school. Pupils are given time to respond to the guidance given by teachers. Pupils are clear that 'my teachers' comments help me understand and learn better'.

Governors are strongly committed to bringing greater levels of challenge to school leaders. A full review of governance is now underway. As a result, they have an increasingly clear understanding of their own part in improving the school. Governors have reviewed their own skills and participated in further training. This is helping them to provide increasingly high levels of challenge and support to school leaders. Consequently, the necessary improvements are happening more quickly.

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 local authority knows the school well and has provided a wide range of support to help the school move forward quickly. The local authority adviser has arranged for you and your subject leaders to work with an experienced headteacher to support staff training and actions for improving teaching and learning. The governing body has benefitted from training and is now determined to hold the school to account for the standards pupils achieve.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Leahy
Her Majesty's Inspector