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Mr David Young
Headteacher
Cams Lane Primary School
Cams Lane
Radcliffe
Manchester
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Dear Mr Young

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Cams Lane Primary School, Bury

Following my visit to your school on 12 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 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.

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

- urgently increase the frequency and variety of strategies used to judge the effectiveness of individual teachers. Use this information to ensure that weaker teachers are effectively supported and challenged to improve
- review leaders' current roles and responsibilities to ensure that these are more effectively distributed across the leadership team; including for the more experienced teachers

- increase the level of accountability for leaders at all levels, based on the impact they are having on driving improvement in their given areas of responsibility
- accelerate the process by which the effectiveness of governance is being reviewed. Use the findings from this to urgently develop and improve all governors, so they are better placed to hold school leaders to account.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and with three representatives of the Governing Body. I also met with an adviser from the local authority, with your school improvement adviser, and with the headteacher from your local support school. I made short visits to each class and looked at a small sample of work from Key Stage 2. I evaluated your school improvement plan, and other documentation and evidence relating to the steps you are taking to improve the quality of teaching.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection in July, the leader responsible for the Early Years and also the special educational needs co-ordinator have left the school. These responsibilities are now being shared by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Two newly qualified teachers took up post in September, and a new business manager started this month. A governor from the partner support school – Christ Church, in Walshaw – has been seconded onto the governing body.

Main findings

You have worked closely with the headteacher of your support school to put in place a programme of training for all teaching staff. This has focussed on building teachers' competencies in teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make), developing early reading and also in building leadership capacity at the school. Teachers have observed effective practice and some have reflected well on this, reporting on how they will change their own work in the light of what they have learnt. However, you have not monitored the impact this training has had on improving their practice. As such, you are unable to say if it has had an impact on improving the progress pupils make.

Whilst you have conducted some short visits to classes, you have not systematically checked on the effectiveness of individual teachers. Your checks on teaching have not focussed on the areas for improvement from your last inspection. Whilst you have concerns about some teachers, you do not yet have in place a support plan for them, and do not use a range of evidence by which to check if they are improving quickly enough. As such, weak teaching is not being effectively tackled. You have reviewed the marking policy with staff, and pupils now have more opportunities to respond to feedback from their teacher in 'make a difference' time. However, this is

sometimes tokenistic. It doesn't always enable pupils to improve their work, or try more challenging tasks. Also, whilst this practice was evident in pupils' written work, a similar approach in mathematics has not yet been developed. In this subject, pupils receive little guidance as to how they can improve their work.

You have worked with your partner school to start the process by which you can develop the skills of your subject leaders. However, too few members of staff are carrying too much responsibility. There is no evidence yet, that subject leaders are driving improvement in the classroom. In some cases, you are concerned about the skills of some leaders. Whilst you have built leadership targets into their performance review this year, it is still unclear how soon and against what range of evidence you will be holding them to account.

Governors have commissioned an external review of their effectiveness and have conducted an audit of their current skills. In conjunction with advice from the local authority, they have also established a standards committee, whose purpose is to check on the progress the school makes. Governors are only just starting to appreciate the pace of improvement that is needed. They need considerable support in order to effectively challenge school leaders.

External support

The local authority categorises the school as a school causing concern. They have commissioned a national training school to work with school leaders and teaching staff in order to build capacity and drive improvement at the school. The local authority adviser and the support headteacher have a very clear view of what improvements are needed. Some of the support provided has clearly impacted on teachers' practice, but the extent of this is currently unknown by school leaders.

I am copying this letter to Colin Jones, the Chair of the Governing Body, and to Mr Mark Carriline, the Director of Children, Young People and Culture for Bury.

Yours sincerely

Philippa Darley

Her Majesty's Inspector