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9 December 2014

Joanne Weichlbauer  
Headteacher  
Ladygrove Primary School  
Old Office Road  
Dawley  
Telford  
TF4 2LF

Dear Mrs Weichlbauer

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ladygrove Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 8 December 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 November 2013. 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. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the underachievement of disadvantaged pupils, in some year groups and subjects, is identified and tackled in the raising attainment plan and that leaders and governors regularly check on the progress and attainment of this group of pupils.

## Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher and with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last monitoring inspection. I also met with the English and mathematics subject leaders and the leader responsible for the Early Years Foundation Stage to discuss the impact of their work. The school improvement plan was evaluated and we discussed information about pupils' achievement. Together, we made brief visits to classrooms and looked at a sample of pupils' books. I also looked at the records kept following leaders' checks on the work of teachers.

## Context

The previous headteacher retired at the end of the summer term and you took up post as headteacher in September 2014. One teacher has left the school and another has been appointed. A new Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body have been elected and the governing body has been reconstituted.

## Main findings

Although you have been at Ladygrove for less than a term, you already have a very thorough and accurate understanding of the school's current strengths and of the areas which continue to require improvement. You have worked effectively with the deputy headteacher and governors to modify the school's 'raising attainment plan' to reflect the progress that has been made and to set out how you intend to make further improvements in teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress. The plan clearly identifies how leaders and governors will check that the actions taken have been successful.

You are rightly explicit about your expectation that all teaching at Ladygrove should be good or better. You and other leaders are making regular checks on the work of teachers by visiting lessons, looking at the work in pupil's books and evaluating information about pupils' progress. You keep detailed records of these checks and provide helpful feedback to teachers so that they are clear about strengths in their teaching as well as knowing precisely what they need to improve. You also record how and when you will check that the required improvements have been made. School leaders have ensured that teachers have more frequent opportunities to work together in school, and with colleagues from other schools, to confirm that their assessment judgements are accurate.

Improvements in teaching are leading to improvements in pupils' attainment. For example, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception increased substantially in 2014 and consequently, more children were ready for Year 1.

As a result of improvements in the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check rose considerably in 2014 and was above the average nationally.

In 2014, standards reached by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 rose in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in writing and mathematics was slightly above the average nationally. However, in reading, despite considerable improvement, standards remained below the average nationally. You have rightly identified reading as an area for improvement in Key Stage 1 and are working with teachers to develop their skills and to raise the profile of reading within the school by purchasing more new books and enhancing reading areas in classrooms. Leaders and teachers have also worked successfully with parents to promote the importance of regular reading at home. Information about pupils currently in Key Stage 1 indicates that they are now making better progress in reading.

The standards reached by pupils leaving Year 6 in 2014 rose in reading and mathematics so that they were closer to the average nationally. However, standards in writing declined slightly and standards in spelling, grammar and punctuation remain low. You have ensured that the need for improvement in these areas is clearly identified and addressed on the raising attainment plan. Additional training in the teaching of writing has been provided for teachers and teaching assistants and a new spelling programme has been introduced. The work in pupils' books indicates that this is beginning to lead to improvements in most classes. However, your monitoring of pupils' work has correctly identified that handwriting remains poor for some pupils.

You are carefully checking on the progress of different groups of pupils such as boys and girls and disadvantaged pupils. As a result, you are aware that in some year groups and subjects disadvantaged pupils are not making as much progress as other pupils. You are taking actions to tackle this inequality. However, this important area for improvement is not clearly identified in your raising attainment plan and so it is not clear how leaders and governors will evaluate the impact of the changes made.

Teachers' marking has continued to improve and most teachers now write comments which ensure that pupils know what they have done well. Teachers are increasingly giving guidance to pupils about how they should improve their work. However, on occasions the next steps identified by teachers are too vague or do not identify the most pressing areas for improvement.

Middle leaders have grown in confidence and are now able to talk about the impact of their work in improving teaching and raising standards of achievement. They work with you and the deputy to make regular checks on the quality of teaching and on pupils' progress and as a result, they have a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses within their areas of responsibility.

The new Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body know the school's strengths and main priorities for improvement. They and other governors make regular visits to the school and report back at their meetings on their findings. They take their responsibilities seriously and attend training to ensure that they are developing knowledge and skills which enable them to provide improving levels of support and challenge to school leaders. Governors have improved their understanding of performance management requirements and now ensure that performance targets for staff, including the headteacher, are closely linked to the national teacher standards and to improving pupils' achievement. Governors have ensured that there is a clear and fair link between staff performance and pay. Governors know how specific funding such as Pupil Premium and primary sports funding are spent but are not sure about the impact of this money on outcomes for pupils.

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 continues to provide good support which is helping the school to make the necessary improvements. A representative of the local authority visits the school each half term to check that leaders and governors are being successful in improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement. Local authority advisors have worked effectively with subject leaders and with the Early Years Foundation stage leader. As a result, these leaders have improved their skills in analysing information about pupils' attainment and progress and in checking on the quality of teaching and the work in pupils' books. Advisors have also led training for staff to help them improve their skills in the teaching of writing.

The local authority has also brokered the services of a school improvement partner (SIP) who is a successful local headteacher. The SIP has worked with governors so that they have improved their understanding of performance management procedures for staff, including the headteacher. As a result, governors are more able to hold school leaders to account for their work.

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

Yours sincerely

Morag Kophamel  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

cc. Chair of the Governing Body  
cc. Local authority