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Mrs Dawn Martin
Headteacher
Gossops Green Community Primary
Kidborough Road
Gossops Green
Crawley
RH11 8HW

Dear Mrs Martin

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Gossops Green Community Primary

Following my visit to your school on 19 January 2015, 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 October 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

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 sharpen the school action plan by:

- setting measurable goals for each objective so that everyone knows exactly what to aim for and can identify success.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher; the learning leader; two members of the governing body and a group of middle level leaders to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. A telephone call was made to a representative of the local authority to discuss the school's progress. The

school action plan was evaluated and some examples of teachers' planning were reviewed. Brief visits were made to all classes, to see the school in action. The checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children were also reviewed.

Context

Since the inspection in October 2014 two teachers, including the Year 3-4 team leader, have left the school. The assessment leader has been released from class teaching in order to focus fully on leadership responsibilities. All of these teachers are being covered in class by staff on supply contracts. Two experienced teachers are sharing the Year 3-4 team leader role. The music teacher left on maternity leave and has been replaced by a music teacher on a temporary contract. The chair of governors stepped down and this role is being covered by the vice-chair of governors while the governing body reconstitutes.

Main findings

Your staff were disappointed by the outcome of the Ofsted inspection in October 2014. But they have rallied and are now determinedly tackling the improvements needed to move the school towards being judged 'good'.

The school action plan is the key document driving improvements. Your useful schedule for each term shows staff exactly what they need to work on and the timescale for each action. This helps them to organise their work better. However the plan does not always show exactly what you are aiming to achieve, which makes it hard for staff and governors to check if improvements are happening.

Following the inspection you released the assessment leader from class responsibility to focus on analysing pupil progress data in order to raise standards. This has given you more time to concentrate on checking how well teachers improve their work. The deputy headteacher and the assessment leader have overseen developments to teachers' planning. The examples of planning seen on this inspection indicate that teachers are now much more specific about what individual pupils need to achieve in each lesson. It is too early to measure the impact of this work on standards. Senior leaders are held back by difficulties in recruiting high quality permanent teachers to move the school forward.

You recently reviewed teaching arrangements for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6. They are now taught in year groups for English and mathematics, instead of mixed age classes. In this way you intend to prepare Year 6 pupils more thoroughly for their end of year tests. A small number of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding are also receiving additional support to develop their skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling. It is too soon to see the effectiveness of these arrangements.

You have rightly raised the status of middle level leaders. They now check teachers' work together, which helps them to understand how each year group can contribute to raising standards. For example, after reviewing mathematics books they identified the need to improve pupils' ability to recall basic number facts. They shared this with their year group teams who identified actions to help the situation. Middle leaders are motivated by this more cohesive approach. They have a better understanding of the reasons behind improvements and their part in implementing them effectively. Better communication between year group teams is starting to spread expertise and good practice more successfully across the school.

A meeting to elect a new chair of governors will shortly take place. Whilst temporary arrangements are in place governors continue to provide a good level of challenge and support for the school. They are sensibly identifying ways to reduce some of your administrative tasks to allow you to concentrate on improving the quality of teaching. The planned reconstitution of the governing body will focus governors' work within two committees. Governors are rightly using information from the recent skills audit to allocate governors to the committee where their talents are best suited.

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 useful support through regular visits from the school improvement advisor. Since the inspection the local authority has also provided additional funding specifically to help raise standards for pupils in Year 6. Furthermore the local authority advisor for English is assisting teachers to plan effective lessons. It is too soon to judge the success of this extra help.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Gard
Her Majesty's Inspector