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4 February 2015

Mrs Valerie Hudson
Headteacher
Hartsbourne Primary School
Hartsbourne Road
Bushey
WD23 1SJ

Dear Mrs Hudson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hartsbourne Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 3 February 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.

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's plans for improvement by including quantifiable targets along with appropriate timescales
- ensure that school leaders make regular checks on the quality of work in all subject areas.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and discussed the school's plans for improvement. I also met with the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and four member of the governing body, including the chair of governors and the governor with responsibility for safeguarding. I evaluated the school's improvement plans along with other documentation and visited all classrooms with you to observe

teaching and learning. I also met with a group of pupils and observed behaviour in the playground and around school.

Context

Since the previous inspection one teacher has left the school and a newly qualified teacher has been appointed.

Main findings

School leaders, including governors, have acted promptly to address the weaknesses that were identified. They have taken effective action to improve the quality of communication with parents, which was identified as a particular weakness. Governors have organised meetings with parents to share the school's plans for improvement. They have also ensured that a wider range of information about the school has been made available on the school's web site.

The school has reviewed and amended its arrangements for promoting good behaviour. A new policy has been developed, which has provided greater clarity to parents and pupils about what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and clearly defines what is meant by bullying. This is helping to ensure that incidents of misbehaviour, which are extremely rare at the school, are being dealt with more effectively by encouraging pupils to consider the impact of their actions on others. The behaviour that was seen during this inspection was exemplary, both in the classrooms and around school. The pupils that the inspector spoke to were also extremely positive about life at the school. Since the previous inspection, an increasing proportion of parents are expressing positive views on Parent View about the school's leadership and the management of pupils' behaviour and safety.

School leaders have developed comprehensive plans to ensure that the school is judged to be good or outstanding at the next inspection. These plans contain appropriate actions that the school intends to take in order to make the required improvements. However, the plans do not contain detail about the targets that the school is setting for improvement. As a result, school leaders will find it difficult to assess the impact or timeliness of the measures they are taking. For example, the school recognises the need to check on the quality of work in all areas of the curriculum. However, no reference is made in the plans to end of key stage targets, nor do the plans show how and when subjects other than English and mathematics will be monitored.

Governors are ambitious for the school and are keen to ensure that it improves rapidly so that it achieves a judgement of at least good at the next inspection. The governing body is currently reviewing the role of each governor to ensure that they are deployed effectively. They have already made changes which are beginning to have an impact. For example, a governor has been linked to behaviour and safety and has helped in the development of the new behaviour policy. Other governors

have taken responsibility for liaising more closely with parents. This focus on the key issues, and the urgency with which actions have been taken, has ensured that the school has already begun to secure the necessary improvements.

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 to the school. An adviser works closely with the headteacher, and other officers are currently carrying out a review of the school's governance arrangements. Newly appointed governors have also valued the induction training that has been provided for them.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow
Her Majesty's Inspector

cc. Chair of the Governing Body
cc. Director of Children's Services