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Miss J Donovan
Headteacher
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Lydeard St Lawrence
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Dear Miss Donovan

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lydeard St Lawrence Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 28 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.

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:

- improve the consistency in the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Years 1 and 2
- refine and strengthen the link between the school's action plans so that even greater consistency and accountability can be established
- ensure the governing body reviews the school's policies relating to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs so that they reflect current guidance and meet statutory requirements

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the lead teachers for literacy and numeracy and two members of the governing body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. In addition, telephone conversations were held with a Local Leader of Education (LLE) working with the school and a representative from the local authority. School information about pupils' progress and attainment were taken into account. All classes were visited during which time a selection of pupils' mathematics and writing books were reviewed and a further sample of books from Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 were inspected. The governing body minutes were considered along with the pupils' attendance records. The school's action plans were evaluated.

Context

There has been some turbulence in the teaching of the Year 1 and 2 class as they had three different teachers in the autumn term. One full-time teacher has now been in place for this class since January 2015.

Main findings

The leaders of literacy, numeracy have quickly adapted to their new roles. They have an earnest determination to uphold their responsibilities and drive school improvement. They have conducted observations of pupils learning in lessons, frequently inspect pupils' books and are tracking the progress and achievement of individual pupils and different groups of pupils. They are successfully using this information to help raise teachers' expectations of what standards are required. As a result, lesson planning has improved across the school.

They have both produced an action plan for their area of responsibility. These plans need to be better linked with the main school action plan to provide greater accountability and shared responsibility. For example, it would be helpful for the plans to have the success criteria for key issues clearly indicated so that senior leaders and the governing body can see at a glance if progress is fast enough. Currently, the school action plan is too imprecise to enable the governing body to measure robustly the progress that the school is making in 'getting to good'.

Governor visits to the school are more frequent and purposeful. As a result, they have a better understanding about what is going well and where further work and improvement is required. The reported policy for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is out of date. The report must comply with [section 69\(2\) of the Children and Families Act 2014 regulation 51](#) and [schedule 1 of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#).

The headteacher and staff have been successful in getting more information routinely to parents and being available remotely, or face-to-face, to respond to concerns and views. Website question and answer sessions are used, for example to explain what changes the school is making after the last Ofsted report. Teachers are now available on the playground at the beginning and end of the school day to field questions that parents may have. The headteacher has used innovative schemes to encourage pupils with low attendance to want to be in school and has been tenacious in following up pupil absence. As a result, attendance has increased.

Turbulence in teaching has led to a lack of challenge and low expectations of what pupils can and should be achieving in Year 1 and 2, particularly in mathematics. In this class, the adults do not tackle possible mathematics misconceptions swiftly enough. In Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 adults and pupils do not always use the correct mathematical vocabulary. Tasks provided are not always sufficiently challenging and pupils are over-reliant on class teachers when they are stuck or finish their work early.

Pupils are making the most progress and are learning best in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6. In these classes, there is evidence of a good written and verbal dialogue between different adults supporting pupils' learning and the pupil themselves. These discussions are helping pupils to know what they have done well and guides them to improve their work: which they do. However, the regularity and quality of the marking of pupils' work remains too inconsistent across the school. It is invariably positive but too often is not used by pupils to improve their work. Sometimes this is because the comments made by teachers are not targeted at improving learning or are not sufficiently explicit about what is it that the teacher wants them to do to next.

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

Through two visits to the school, the LLE has a very clear and accurate view of the school and has identified with the headteacher the help that she can provide. The impact of this work is too early to judge.

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

Yours sincerely

Steffi Penny
Her Majesty's Inspector