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Mrs Eileen Ross
Headteacher
Herbert Morrison Primary School
Hartington Road
Lambeth
London
SW8 2HP

Dear Mrs Ross

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Herbert Morrison Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 March 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 November 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:

- ensure that all teaching across all year groups is good or better, so that pupils make rapid progress
- develop pupils' writing skills, including handwriting
- develop the skills of middle leaders so they are able to evaluate the impact of the school's strategies to drive improvement.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, senior and middle leaders, pupils from Key Stage 2 and three representatives from the governing body, including the Vice Chair of Governors, to discuss actions taken since the last inspection. I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.

I examined school improvement documents, records of the monitoring of teaching, safeguarding records and governing body minutes. I looked at pupils' current achievement data as well as published information. You accompanied me during visits to classes, where we observed teaching from Nursery through to Year 6 and looked at pupils' work.

Context

One Key Stage 2 teacher is on maternity leave. This class is currently being covered by a senior leader.

Main findings

The detailed improvement plan you have put in place is evaluated regularly. Clear monthly targets ensure actions can be tracked effectively to secure rapid improvement. Senior and middle leaders support teachers and teaching assistants daily by checking their planning, modelling good practice and teaching alongside them. This has led to rapid improvements being made in a short space of time. Middle leaders are developing their skills. Further development is needed to enable them to evaluate their phase more thoroughly in order to bring about more rapid improvement, particularly in Key Stage 2.

There have been improvements in the quality of teaching. Intensive support to improve teachers' skills has eradicated inadequate teaching. Teachers have observed outstanding practice in other schools. The proportion of good and outstanding teaching has increased. However, there is still too much teaching that requires improvement. Leaders are aware of the need to address this more rapidly and ensure that targets in improvement documents are more challenging to reflect their high expectations.

Teachers' feedback provides clear targets to help pupils improve their work. Where best practice is seen, adults provide regular feedback throughout the lesson. This extends and deepens pupils' understanding effectively. Pupils are given opportunities to respond to the extended feedback they are given and better progress can be seen in most pupils' books. This practice now needs to be applied consistently.

A new system has been introduced to track pupils' progress. This has transformed how assessment information is used within the school. Teachers use the system regularly to plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils. Work is set at the right level for pupils. They are also able to access more challenging work within lessons to stretch themselves further. The progress of different groups of pupils is analysed, including the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who are more able. Leaders teach identified groups of children daily to accelerate their progress.

According to the school's latest assessment information, most pupils are making accelerated progress in reading and mathematics. Reading areas have been developed in classrooms and the library has been refurbished, enabling pupils to access quality texts. Maths resources have been purchased and training on how to make best use of them has taken place. Pupils are using new resources to solve mathematical problems with increased speed and accuracy. Pupils are not making as much progress in writing. The school is aware of this and has introduced measures to improve progress. Recently, a new handwriting scheme has been implemented. This has not yet had time to impact on pupils' writing. Leaders recognise that pupils need more opportunities to write at length to develop their literacy skills further.

Governors value the quality of the systematic changes that are enabling them to check on the progress of pupils more thoroughly. Governors challenge the school confidently with regards to assessment information. However, governors acknowledge the need for further training to develop their skills in other monitoring activities, so they can challenge and support leaders more widely. Governors acknowledge that further work needs to be done to ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum is maintained, whilst raising attainment in English and mathematics.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding took place in February 2015. Priorities for improvement have been clearly identified and leaders and governors are working effectively to ensure that all recommendations are put in place.

External support

The local authority has provided support to the school, but this has not been fully effective. Following teaching and learning reviews, advisors have highlighted strengths within the school, but failed to identify areas for improvement. However, the local authority has contributed to recent school improvements by providing the school with additional advisors. A literacy advisor has supported phonics teaching (the sounds that letters make) and developed practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage. A numeracy advisor has provided training to develop more effective teaching of problem solving.

An additional school consultant provides further support to the headteacher. She has worked alongside leaders to introduce new practices and systems across the school. These have enabled teachers and leaders to evaluate their practice more effectively. Leaders value the significant improvements that have been brought about as a result of her input.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Mel Rose
Her Majesty's Inspector