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John White
Colley Lane Primary School
Colley Lane
Halesowen
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Dear Mr White

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Colley Lane Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 20 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 December 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:

- Review the leadership structure of all aspects of teaching and learning to include reviewing how training opportunities meet the specific needs of individual teachers.
- Provide opportunities for teachers and leaders at all levels to observe best practice in other schools with a similar profile of learners.

Evidence

During the inspection meetings were held with yourself and four other members of your senior management team, representatives from the governing body and the local authority, to discuss action taken since the last inspection. A short visit was made to classrooms to look at pupils' books and talk to pupils about their learning.

Other documents viewed included, minutes from governing body meetings, school development plans, the governing body action plan, and various external review documents.

Main findings

You have identified the immediate priorities following the inspection in December, and created the Raising Achievement Plan. This plan sets out clearly the actions to be taken and the milestones along the way by which leaders and governors can monitor the impact of this work.

In mathematics your work has started at a pace, and you have lost no time in bringing about significant changes in how mathematics is taught, and assessed. You have undertaken extensive research with your governors about how to improve outcomes in mathematics looking at different approaches to teaching and assessment. Having reached a decision about your chosen model teachers are now able to use this resource to clearly identify the gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. There is now more evidence that teachers' planning is carefully matched to the needs of the students. This is building teachers' confidence to use new resources and experiment with different ways of organising their classrooms. Alongside this work teaching assistants have also received training tackling common misconceptions in mathematics, updating their correct use of mathematical terminology, and building their confidence in supporting pupils with practical problem solving activities. Planning has been reviewed in Key Stage 1 and new schemes of work are now in place. This significant piece of work to remodel the teaching of mathematics across the school is in its infancy, however, there is already evidence in pupils' books that work is targeted more precisely to their individual needs. There is more to be achieved with an urgent focus on the achievement of your most able pupils. All of this work now requires embedding in everyday practice.

You are aware of the inconsistencies that remain in the marking of pupils' work. A new marking policy has been implemented following the inspection in December and there is evidence in books that pupils respond to their teachers' comments and some complete additional tasks to extend their learning. There is still some work to be done exploring and discussing the impact of this work. Firstly in training pupils to be reflective and evaluative in their comments and ensuring that teachers comment at an appropriate level of comprehension that pupils understand.

Current tracking in school suggests that outcomes will improve this year; you are in no way complacent about the important work ahead of you to continue to raise and sustain better outcomes for your pupils, in particular the most able. Pupils' progress is kept under close scrutiny, and you have well established routines for collecting progress information and identifying the need for additional support. This information is also regularly discussed with your governing body.

You and your governing body are aware of the needs to improve the attainment and progress of your pupils and the particular need to stretch your most able pupils. In order to address this you are urgently exploring a new leadership structure for the school. This will result in new areas of responsibility and clear lines of accountability to drive improvements in this larger than average primary school. As part of this restructure the leadership of teaching and learning will be reviewed to ensure that teachers receive training that is tailored to their individual needs and is underpinned by a comprehensive coaching programme across the school.

Governors are passionate and ambitious for the school. They welcomed whole heartedly the opportunity to review their work and complete an audit of their skills. They are keen to ensure that there are a range of skills across the governing body. They are now growing in their confidence to analyse the information about pupils' achievement and ask questions that challenge as well as provide you with support. Since the inspection they have worked with you to plan purposeful visits to school that provide them with useful information so that they can evaluate the school's work. They have also discussed the format of how information is presented to them so they understand it and can draw comparisons and conclusion about the progress of pupils over time. Governors have been very involved in the decision making to develop teaching and assessment in mathematics. They have detailed plans in place to improve the communication between governors and parents. The development of governance is very well supported and evaluated by an external consultant.

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

Both you and your governors value the support being provided by the local authority. This work has supported the process of reviewing the work of the governing body and provided funding for middle leadership training. In addition to this the local authority has planned and undertaken a review visit involving other headteachers to provide you with useful and insightful analysis of your work. A second visit is planned in the summer term. It is suggested that this work also provides leaders with the chance to visit these headteachers in their own schools to see different school systems and processes at work as part of their leadership development.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Reeves

Associate Inspector

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority