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23 April 2015

Mr C Parker
Orchard Junior School
Water Lane
Dibden Purlieu
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Hampshire
SO45 4SB

Dear Mr Parker

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Orchard Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 23 April 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, senior leaders, some subject leaders, a group of governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We completed short visits to classrooms together, during which I spoke to some pupils about their work and looked through some of their books. I evaluated the school improvement plan and reviewed documentation about the work of the governing body and leaders' checks on teaching.

Context

Since the last inspection, one teacher has left the school. The governing body has reconstituted.

Main findings

You provide ambitious and empowering leadership at the school. Your actions to tackle the areas that were identified in the previous report have been relevant and effective. As a result, all staff have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Governors work effectively with you to drive improvement. For example, the external review of governance they commissioned for themselves, demonstrates their desire to continually improve.

Middle leaders are becoming more effective. They undertake a range of useful activities to check the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. All leaders are well informed about their part in evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school. You make clear what middle leaders should be doing and support them to be successful. This has ensured that leaders at all levels are working systematically to bring about rapid improvements where they are needed.

Teaching is improving. You have developed effective and innovative approaches for staff to share good practice. For example, the effective use of video recording equipment has enabled teachers to improve their practice by observing each other. You have also paired teachers together effectively to allow stronger teachers to share what they are doing with those who need to improve their practice. As a result, there is now greater consistency in the quality of teaching at the school.

Pupils' achievement in writing has already improved. The writing leader has worked alongside teachers effectively to improve how writing is taught. Teachers are now ensuring that pupils learn writing skills over a series of lessons. Pupils are then able to apply what they have learnt in extended pieces of writing that link well to what is being studied in other subjects.

Teachers' feedback to pupils is now more useful. Pupils are making better use of comments to improve their work, although there is still more work to ensure that this is as effective as it can be.

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

You have made excellent use of the tailored support you have been given by the local authority. Regular advisory visits have been used well to support leaders in identifying how to build effectively upon the work that they have already done. You have also worked effectively with the local authority to create a detailed school improvement plan. This includes useful criteria through which progress can be measured. As a result, governors are able to hold you fully to account for the difference leaders are making.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Barnes

Her Majesty's Inspector