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27 April 2015

Mrs C Bishop
Headteacher
Peel Common Junior School
The Drive
Gosport
PO13 0QD

Dear Mrs Bishop

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Peel Common Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 27 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 January 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection.

The school should take immediate action to:

- accelerate improvements to the quality of teaching
- improve leaders' and governors' use of information about the achievement of groups of pupils to evaluate the impact of their work.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, some subject leaders and a group of governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone. I completed short visits to classrooms, during which I spoke to pupils about their work and looked through their books. I evaluated the

school improvement plan and reviewed documentation about the work of the governing body and leaders' checks on teaching.

Main findings

You and the deputy headteacher provide supportive and nurturing leadership at the school. However, you do not always expect enough of teachers, particularly those whose practice is not improving quickly enough.

Senior leaders' evaluations of work to improve the school are not effective enough. Leaders' checks on teaching, including those done by subject leaders, focus too much on what teachers are doing and not enough on the difference being made to pupils' progress. Subject leaders are not yet having enough impact on pupils' achievement. Leaders are still unable to identify precisely the difference being made to the learning of key groups, such as disadvantaged pupils. This means that leaders, including governors, do not know if their efforts to improve the school are making enough difference where it is most needed.

Teaching remains inconsistent. Not enough has been done to tackle weaker performance and reduce variations in the progress of pupils. This is because leaders provide too much of a supportive culture and have not held teachers sufficiently to account, particularly when pupils are not making enough progress.

Your work to improve how writing is taught at the school is not always making the necessary difference. Some teachers assess pupils carefully and accurately, so they are clear about what each pupil needs to learn next. They use this information effectively to make the best use of time when teaching small groups of pupils new writing skills. Where this is happening, pupils are beginning to make better progress in their writing. However, where teachers do not assess accurately or do not expect enough of pupils, this approach has been much less effective.

Improvements in pupils' achievement are inconsistent. Pupils' use of phonics and their ability to spell with greater accuracy show signs of improvement. Leaders have rightly identified there is more work to be done to ensure pupils punctuate their work accurately and improve their grammar. Pupils like the incentives you have introduced to improve their handwriting and this has led to improvements in some classes. However, we also saw examples where pupils' presentation of their work remains poor.

Lower-attaining pupils are now more frequently supported with their reading. You have ensured that there is now discrete time for support assistants to hear these pupils read. There are signs that this has led to improved achievement in reading for some pupils, although this also remains varied.

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

School leaders' use of external support has been varied. The local authority has provided useful feedback and, at times, leaders have acted positively to improve what they are doing. However, there have been occasions when advice has not been acted upon quickly enough, such as sharpening the analysis of pupils' achievement. Some advice has also not been helpful. For example, the review of pupil premium funding did not provide specific enough information for the school to evaluate how they could improve this area of work.

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