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8 May 2015

Mrs M E McCarthy and Mrs S Tarrant
Executive Headteacher and Consultant Headteacher
Riverbridge Primary School
Knowle Green
Staines
TW18 1AJ

Dear Mrs McCarthy and Mrs Tarrant

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Riverbridge Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 8 May 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 second 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. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

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:

- develop middle leaders so they can help you to improve the school, as a priority, given this was an area I raised on my previous visit
- work with governors to balance the budget, ensuring that all aspects of finance provide value for money
- hold all staff to account for the full scope of their roles.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, other leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and the vice-chair, and a representative from the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I visited classes with

you and the deputy headteacher, looked at work in pupils' books and reviewed school documentation, including the school improvement plan.

Context

The previous headteacher retired at Easter. In your roles of executive headteacher and consultant headteacher, you are now working half the week each, leading the school.

Main findings

Following a well-planned hand-over between the previous headteacher and yourselves, you have already begun to increase the pace of change. You have a thorough understanding about the school's weaknesses and are clear about the actions you need to take. The school improvement plan you have drafted now links well to the identified weaknesses from the section 5 report, and demonstrates your ambition for the school to make swift improvements. You are adding details so that staff are clear about what is happening and governors can hold you to account, but I am pleased to see it has regular check points along the way so you can see if progress is being made.

Leadership and management are beginning to improve. The changes you have made to the leadership team are helping to ensure greater consistency of communication and expectations. Middle leaders have had useful training from the local authority, and consequently have a better understanding about their responsibilities. However, they do not yet have the necessary skills to help you to improve the school.

The quality of teaching is improving. Teachers are clearer about what they need to do to improve their practice. Leaders have continued to visit classes regularly and are using this information to work with individuals. In some classes and year groups we saw improved learning, such as in Year 1, where we saw some high quality writing from pupils. Teachers are more aware of their responsibility to make sure all their pupils make good progress. However, there is still much to do to ensure everyone knows the full scope of their roles and is held to account.

The early years environment has improved; it is more attractive and better organised to support different aspects of learning, such as mathematics and construction. Some of the adults are supporting learning well, using skilful questions and comments. You are aware there is more to do to ensure consistency in all activities.

Governors have taken decisive action to secure effective leadership. They are committed to getting the school to good and are asking more relevant questions to make sure they understand what they are being told. Although relevant, the questions are not sufficiently focused on whether the actions are making an impact on school improvement.

You are working increasingly well with the governing body to move the school forward in areas besides teaching. A good example of this is the improved communication with the school community, so that staff and parents are kept more fully informed. You and governors are aware that the current budget does not balance and are beginning to make plans to redress this.

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

External support

Local authority advisors have reviewed the support they provide so it is now more useful and effective. They were very proactive in securing your help to lead the school, so that progress was not slowed. The local authority representative is liaising well with you to ensure their planned support meets the needs of the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Louise Adams
Her Majesty's Inspector