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18 May 2015

Mr Basnett
Headteacher
Childwall Valley Primary School
Liverpool
L25 1NW

Dear Mr Basnett

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Childwall Valley Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2015. 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 immediate action to:

- Ensure the school action plan, and related plans for improving achievement in English and mathematics, include specific targets for attainment and progress in each year group. These to include the proportion of pupils expected to make accelerated progress, so that leaders know more pupils are on track to exceed age-related expectations by the end of each Key Stage.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and toured the school with your assistant headteacher. I met with three representatives of the governing body and with an adviser from the local authority. During my tour of the school I looked at a few samples of pupils' books and spoke informally to some pupils about their mathematics work. I scrutinised a range of documentation which included your school improvement plan and records of your checks on the quality of teaching. I

also looked at records of external monitoring and support that have been written by the local authority.

Context

One teacher has resigned from her post since the section 5 inspection. The school has been awarded the ArtsMark Gold award by the Arts Council.

Main findings

You have responded positively to the findings of your recent section 5 inspection. You have drawn up a succinct action plan, which details the urgent actions you will take to get the school moving in the right direction. You have acted immediately to release the assistant headteacher from her day-to-day teaching responsibilities. This is so she can concentrate on building programmes of support for teachers across the school, and monitor improvements as they happen. For example, she has led training on improving planning in mathematics. This has developed a different approach in the classroom. Teachers now share with pupils the 'Big Picture' for the unit of work they are studying. This enables pupils to see how any new learning connects to what has happened previously, and it clarifies what they need to be able to demonstrate in order to make good progress. It was evident at this inspection that all teachers are following this approach and the pupils I spoke to could tell me how it is helping them to better understand their work.

You are in the process of writing more detailed actions plans which will drive improvement in English and mathematics. These are appropriate as they will hold subject leaders to account for their work. However, they do not include detailed targets for pupil progress in each year group. Currently, there are no clear targets against which you can check if more pupils are on track to exceed age-related expectations.

You have given your history and geography subject leaders time to evaluate the quality of provision in their subjects. From this, they have identified priorities for ongoing development. They now give specific instructions to teachers about how each topic can support different writing genres. This has improved the focus of these lessons and ensures that literacy skills are systematically built into the wider curriculum.

You have worked with the local authority to identify two partner schools that will provide support in improving aspects of teaching and learning and in building the strength of your leadership team. These links are in their infancy, so the impact of these cannot be measured at this time.

Governors are committed to the school and gather first-hand information on the quality of teaching. They recognise that currently, a great deal of the responsibility for driving improvement rests with one or two individuals. They have invested extra

resources in ensuring that internal leadership capacity will grow over the next academic year.

External support

The local authority adviser knows the school well and is co-ordinating the support and challenge that officers have organised for school leaders. They have funded some mathematics consultancy work that has effectively supported the assistant headteacher to make early improvements to this subject. The local authority is supporting governors to try to recruit new teaching staff for September and have made alternative provision if this is not successful. The local authority holds a challenge board meeting with school leaders each half term. This checks on the pace of improvement at the school and the quality of support that goes into it.

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

Yours sincerely

Philippa Darley

Her Majesty's Inspector