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22 June 2015

Nathan Jones
Wythall, Meadow Green Primary
Meadow Road
Wythall
Birmingham
B47 6EQ

Dear Mr Jones

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wythall, Meadow Green Primary

Following my visit to your school on 19 June 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 further action to:

- ensure that ample opportunities are provided for teachers and leaders to share and moderate assessments of the achievement of pupils
- ensure that leaders monitor the application of the marking policy and that teachers' planning reflects the needs of different pupils.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher and other leaders, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. You joined me on brief visits to classrooms where we spoke with pupils and looked at examples of their work.

Context

Since the inspection in March 2015, two teachers have resigned from their posts and will leave the school at the end of the summer term. One of the middle leaders has had her request to relinquish her leadership role and reduce her teaching commitment from September, on a temporary basis, accepted. You are currently in the process of making appointments to these posts. A new clerk to the governing body has taken up her post.

Main findings

You and the deputy headteacher have shown a tangible determination to improve the school as quickly as possible. You both have an accurate understanding of what needs to be done to bring about the improvements required. The action plan that has been developed is an effective tool to steer the direction for the school. Other leaders are also supporting improvements effectively and are working well with those providing external support. This is developing the school's capacity to continue the improvements once the support is gradually withdrawn.

Improved systems have been put in place for the collection and analysis of assessment information each half term. This means that you now have timely information about how well pupils are progressing and can identify pupils that are not making progress swiftly. The meetings that you hold with teachers to review the assessment information on the pupils that they teach are being used effectively to consider the strategies that will improve their progress. These include more precisely focused additional support for specific groups of pupils. You are organising additional training for teaching assistants so that they are well equipped to provide this support. By analysing the progress made by groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, the most able pupils and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, you have a better understanding of the performance of these pupils and are starting to use this information to improve the provision made for them. Assessment data show that as a result these groups of pupils are starting to make better progress. You have introduced arrangements to check that the assessments that teachers are making are consistent and accurate. These arrangements are not yet sufficiently frequent to enable leaders and teachers to be fully confident in the accuracy of the judgements that are being made.

New systems have been put in place in the early years to collect and review information about how well children are learning. These identify accurately how well children are progressing and teachers are using this information to plan activities that build on children's prior learning.

You have reviewed the school's marking policy. There are now consistent expectations of how pupils will receive feedback on their learning. In some classes these are being used effectively and as a result, pupils are clear about what they are learning and how they can be successful at the tasks set. Teachers' comments

identify succinctly what pupils have done well and how they can improve further. Short tasks provide pupils with the opportunity to put into practice the feedback that they have received. When all of this takes place it contributes to good progress. However, the policy is not yet consistently applied across the school. Leaders do not check carefully enough that teachers are applying the policy consistently and are not always providing clear guidance and support where it is not being applied.

As staff are becoming more familiar with the increasingly detailed assessment information that they have and are starting to plan work that is more closely matched to pupils' different abilities. However, this does not happen consistently and some examples were seen in books where pupils were all given the same work which was too easy for the most able and too difficult for lower achieving pupils.

This is not the case in phonics (the sounds that letters make). As a result of the new way that groups have been organised planning has been adapted to ensure that all groups have sufficient challenge in their learning. Pupils are given opportunities to apply their phonic skills in reading and writing activities when learning other subjects. Consequently, pupils are making better progress in phonics. The school's assessment information indicates that the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the required standard in the phonic screening will be higher than the national average this year.

Governors display a determination to play their part in improving the school. They quickly arranged a review of governance and have used the findings of the review to produce a comprehensive action plan. A programme of training for governors has been put in place, including the development of governors understanding of pupil achievement data. Governors are starting to make regular visits to the school to focus on specific aspects of improvement. These visits, along with the information that you and other leaders provide, are empowering governors to be able to fulfil their role in providing challenge and strategic direction to the school.

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

You are receiving a good level of support and challenge from the school's local authority adviser. He has ensured that the school has received support in improving governance and the teaching of phonics which have already had a positive impact. More recently the local authority has started to provide support for mathematics. The local authority has established a project board which includes governors. This is an effective body which monitors the impact of the school's action plan and in so doing provides support and challenge to leaders and governors.

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

Yours sincerely

Mitchell Moore
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority