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26 June 2015

Helen Turner and Sue Padfield
Headteachers
Lodge Farm Primary School
Mobbsbury Way
Chells
Stevenage
SG2 0HP

Dear Miss Turner and Miss Padfield,

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lodge Farm Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 25 June, 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 February 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Planned actions are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- Ensure that all pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are adequately challenged with high expectations expressed by teachers. Teachers need to rapidly develop their subject knowledge to enable them to prepare and deliver lessons that facilitate good progress.
- Hold teachers to account for the nationally agreed teaching standards, and school expectations, as part of the performance management process. It is imperative that the quality of teaching is regularly monitored and teachers receive feedback that helps them to improve.
- Ensure that teacher's professional development has a direct impact on the quality of teaching and is linked to the areas for improvement outlined in the section 5 report.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you both, representatives from the governing body and a representative of the local authority. We discussed the actions taken since the last inspection and evaluated the school action plan. Together we carried out a short tour of Key Stage 1 and an extended tour of Key Stage 2. We looked at the quality of teaching, spoke to pupils and looked at their books. You shared with me the provisional achievement data for 2015.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, the governing body has reconstituted and has several very recent appointments. A number of teaching staff have left the school, from Year 5 and Year 4. Their positions have been filled with an in-house appointment and one newly recruited teacher in Year 4. Five further teachers are leaving the school at the end of this term and staffing arrangements for September 2015 are in place, with some in-house appointments.

Main findings

There have been improvements in pupil achievement in Year 6 and this is evidenced in the quality of work in their books and the high level of challenge seen in the lessons observed.

Governors have undertaken a review of their role and are acting on the advice provided. The governing body is being very pro-active in providing improved support and challenge to the school. Governors are aware that they need to develop their ability to strategically challenge and new members must be rapidly inducted into their role.

The school's expectations for marking and feedback procedures are evident in the majority of pupils' books. Teachers provide marking and feedback that address spelling, punctuation and grammar improvements, praise for acquired knowledge, skills and understanding and next steps or clarification of misunderstandings. Pupils can explain what the colour codes mean and have responded to teachers' comments. You recognise that feedback to improve learning is not evident in every Key Stage 2 class.

You are developing an understanding of the areas for improvement and have devised actions to address them. Following our discussions, you are aware that you should have higher expectations of teachers and teaching assistants and need to challenge underperformance.

Progress in English books is more apparent than in mathematics books. This is because teachers have stronger subject knowledge and recognise the steps

necessary for pupils to make progress. This also reflects the fact that professional support for English has been in place longer than that for mathematics.

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

The school has commissioned its own consultant, to work specifically with Key Stage 2 teachers, to improve the quality of teaching. This has only been in place for a short period and the impact was not evident during the tour of classrooms. The local authority's teaching and learning advisors for English and mathematics are working with teachers in Key Stage 2. The Hertfordshire improvement partner is working closely with the school and has a clear understanding of Lodge Farm's strengths and areas for development. The local authority is offering additional support and training, and this will continue.

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

Yours sincerely

Deborah Pargeter

Associate Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy