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6 July 2015

Sara Longmire
Dines Green Primary School
Tudor Way
Worcester
WR2 5QH

Dear Mrs Longmire

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Dines Green Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 3 July 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 February 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:

- make sure that the improvement plan identifies more precisely what the arrangements are for monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions taken
- make sure that the guidance to staff on how to provide feedback to pupils is clear and consistently applied.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the you, other leaders, governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Documents detailing the progress made by pupils and the checks that leaders make on the quality of teaching were scrutinised. You and I made brief

visits to some classrooms where we talked to pupils and looked at examples of their work.

Context

Since the previous inspection two new governors have joined the governing body. Two key stage leaders have been appointed from the existing staff and will take up their additional responsibilities fully in the autumn term. At the time of this visit two classes had temporary cover, one because of maternity leave and the other due to sickness.

Main findings

You and the deputy headteacher have a compelling vision of the improvements that the school needs to make. All staff are committed to that vision and actively support it. The ethos of the school is now firmly focused on achievement. Staff and pupils follow the mantra 'look smart, think smart' and display positive attitudes to improvement.

The improvement plans for the school have been revised to take into account the areas for improvement identified at the last full inspection and the outcomes of the honest and incisive self-evaluation that you have undertaken. The plans make clear how teaching, pupils' learning and leadership will be strengthened. Although the plan contains measurable outcomes, it does not specify who will check that the actions are making enough difference to pupils' achievement and teaching. You have rightly identified the need to produce an overview of how the plan will be monitored and evaluated so that leaders and governors can be sure that the improvements are having the desired impact.

All staff have been provided with a comprehensive programme of training. As a result, a consistent view of what constitutes good teaching is emerging and there is greater awareness of the strategies that need to be employed to ensure that pupils make good progress. You and the deputy headteacher make careful checks on the quality of teaching and the impact that it is having on pupils' progress and provide clear feedback and additional support where further improvements are required. This challenge and support is provided to both teachers and teaching assistants.

One result of this training has been that teachers are now planning activities that are more closely linked to pupils' learning needs. By building levels of challenge into activities, pupils now have more opportunities to extend and deepen their learning. This is starting to lead to better progress.

During our brief visits to classrooms, we observed pupils enjoying their activities and working well together. Pupils told me that they make better progress in lessons because 'we get more challenge now'. The quality of handwriting and presentation has improved because teachers have higher expectations of pupils. In all classes

visited there was a strong focus on developing language. Pupils across the school have been enthused by their work connected to the book *Zoo* by Anthony Browne. For example, in a Year 3 class, pupils were writing detailed descriptions of characters from the book. They worked diligently, refining and improving their sentences by referring to the 'steps to success' that their teacher had developed with them.

Following the training that they have been given, teaching assistants are now more effectively supporting pupils' learning. Teachers make it clear in their plans what they want teaching assistant to focus on in lessons. Where teaching assistants support small groups away from the class they provide useful written feedback on the extent to which the pupil has made progress. This information is being used by the leader responsible for the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to evaluate the strategies that are most effective.

Teachers are providing pupils with better feedback, both verbal and written, on what they have done well and how to improve their work further. We saw examples of pupils using the feedback from teachers to correct their errors and improve their work. However, this is not yet consistent across all classes and subjects. You have recognised the need to refine the guidance available to teachers so that all staff are clear about what is expected of them.

Middle leaders have received effective training to develop their skills in supporting and challenging their colleagues to improve the quality of their teaching. Teachers meet with middle leaders each half termly in pupil progress meetings, to identify pupils that need additional support. Middle leaders provide teachers with advice on strategies to support these pupils in the class or through additional group work. Middle leaders are starting to make systematic checks to see whether this support is leading to the desired improvements. As a consequence, middle leaders have a better understanding of successful strategies for improving provision and progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, many groups of pupils across the school still have much ground to make up if they are to reach the standards of attainment that they are capable of.

Governors know the school well. They receive comprehensive information from leaders about the quality of teaching and progress of pupils. Governors are starting to make regular visits to classes. Governors are now well informed and use this information to challenge leaders' plans for improvement and to evaluate the impact of the actions taken. The capacity of the governing body to bring about further improvements has been strengthened by the appointment of additional governors with specific areas of expertise.

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 local authority adviser knows the school well and provides helpful advice and support. She has arranged specific training for middle leaders and support for the leader responsible for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, which have had a positive impact. Through the Project Board, which the local authority has established, there is an effective vehicle for reviewing the progress that the school is making and evaluating the impact of the actions being taken. This board is made up of senior local authority officers, senior 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