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Mrs Jennifer Clancy
Headteacher
Godfrey Ermen Memorial CofE Primary School
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Lancashire
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Dear Mrs Clancy

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Godfrey Ermen Memorial CofE Primary School, Salford

Following my visit to your school on 25 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 the criteria you use to measure the success of your actions relate to their impact on the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils
- ensure that the actions you have introduced are implemented consistently well across the whole school.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, middle leaders, two members of the Governing Body, nine pupils and a telephone call was held with a local authority representative to discuss the actions

taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan as well as other documents were scrutinised. I also visited each classroom with you and the deputy headteacher to speak to pupils, look at their books and observe their learning.

Context

Since the last inspection five teachers have announced their resignation and will leave the school at the end of this academic year. The governing body has been reconstituted and a new Chair has been appointed.

Main findings

A number of teaching staff initially found it difficult to accept the findings of the inspection. However, following further scrutiny of the quality of teaching by you and the local authority, the school community has accepted the need to take stock and move forward. A significant number of teaching staff have taken the decision to leave the school at the end of this academic year. This has presented you with a number of challenges, but you have taken care to find appropriate staffing solutions for September.

Your action plan for improvement sets a clear direction of travel towards becoming a good school. Planned actions are well thought out and address the areas for improvement. Milestones for you and governors to periodically check the effectiveness of these actions are in place. However, some planned checks are superficial and do not measure the outcomes that are of greatest importance. This is because some of the criteria to judge your success do not correspond to the quality of teaching or the achievement of pupils.

You are now holding teachers to greater account for the quality of their teaching and the progress that pupils make. You have introduced a more rigorous cycle of monitoring and evaluation. Initially, senior leaders' feedback to teachers was too generic and did not fully get to the nuts and bolts of what was needed to improve teaching. However, evidence of more recent checks of pupils' workbooks shows that feedback is now detailed and clear. Training is tailored to support those teachers who require it and underperformance is being tackled.

Through the introduction of a new structured teaching sequence, the English subject leader has taken positive action to improve the quality of the teaching of writing. Some teachers are now beginning to use information from assessment tasks to plan work that builds upon pupils' knowledge and develops their writing skills. However, in some classes pupils' writing skills are not improving quickly enough as teachers are not using assessment information with the same rigour.

There is a similar pattern in mathematics, where, despite some improvement, assessment is not used consistently well by all teachers to plan work that matches pupils' needs. In a Year 6 lesson that we observed for example, pupils' learning was

moving forward rapidly because the practical lesson on units of measurement built appropriately on their prior knowledge. However, in another class we observed a number of pupils undertaking repetitive multiplication calculations that clearly did not challenge them appropriately and consequently learning was faltering.

In the past pupils have not been clear about what was expected of them in lessons or what they needed to include in their work to be successful. To address this you have introduced 'pupil aims' and 'steps to success' in every lesson. It is evident that in some classes this is being introduced successfully. Pupils are able to articulate what it is that they need to include in their work and as a consequence the quality of their work is improving. However, in some classes teachers are not explicit enough in making aims or success criteria clear. As a result, some pupils still do not fully understand what is required of them.

Following a review of the school marking and feedback policy most teachers are beginning to use success criteria to provide feedback to pupils who say that this is helping them to move forward with their learning. However, in a small number of classes teachers have not fully got to grips with your new expectations in this area and as a result the quality of feedback to pupils is less effective. You have plans to review the marking and feedback policy further in the new academic year.

Your efforts to raise expectations and improve the learning environment are reaping reward. Pupils talk with pride about how their work is now celebrated and displayed around the school. This, they say, motivates them and encourages them to produce their best work. Pupils especially like their 'star of the week' work displayed in the entrance to their classrooms.

Following a reconstitution and the appointment of a new Chair, governors are now demonstrating a renewed sense of purpose. As one governor explained 'we are no longer going through the motions, there is now a sense of urgency in our work as the pupils deserve the best'. Governors are beginning to align their skills with subject specific areas. For example, a governor who has mathematics expertise is now working with, supporting and challenging the mathematics subject leader. Governors are beginning to check on the work of the school for themselves. For instance, the Chair recently accompanied you on a learning walk. Consequently, governors are now better placed to challenge you during school improvement committee meetings. An external review of governance has begun but is currently at its early stages.

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 has significantly stepped up their involvement with the school since the inspection. The local authority representative is a regular visitor to school

and is supporting and challenging leaders at all levels. She has also brokered support from two local schools that is in the early stages of development.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Bell
Her Majesty's Inspector