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30 June 2015

Mr S Davies
Executive Headteacher
West Minster Primary School
St George's Avenue
Sheerness
ME12 1ET

Dear Mr Davies

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to West Minster Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 29 Jun 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 December 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

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 pupils respond to feedback from their teachers in a meaningful and thoughtful way to improve their work.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the head of school and the assistant headteacher, 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 and I also considered pupil assessment information

for this academic year. I visited most classes to see the school at work. I looked at pupils' work in literacy and topic books.

Context

You joined the school in April 2015 as executive headteacher for both schools in the Sherness West Federation. The acting inclusion manager and special educational needs coordinator has been promoted to the position of assistant headteacher for both the federation.

Main findings

While disappointed by the outcome of the last inspection, you and other senior leaders have acted swiftly and resolutely to effectively tackle the areas for improvement identified in the report. The school's improvement plan is tightly focused on the key priorities and shows clearly what action will be taken and how and when progress will be measured.

Pupils' books show they receive frequent and detailed guidance about how to improve their work. Inconsistencies remain about how well pupils are using this feedback to improve future work.

Better systems are in place for collecting and analysing assessment information. As a result, pupils who are in danger of falling behind are identified and given appropriate support more quickly. Teachers are now fully involved in this process and are more accountable for the progress their pupils make.

Pupils are making better progress in writing. Work completed over the course of this academic year shows pupils are writing more frequently at length and for a range of purposes. Pupils are taking greater pride in their work and this is evident in improvements in the standard of presentation and neater handwriting. You are raising the profile and importance of writing skills effectively in a variety of ways, for example every class has a display showing pupils' writing at the beginning and end of the year. This means staff and pupils can see the progress being made over time and pupils' achievements are being openly acknowledged and celebrated. Additionally, you are providing more experiences to fire pupils' imagination to write, for example through school trips. You have recently carried out a whole school audit of writing with an external consultant. You have rightly identified the need to adopt a consistent whole school approach for how writing is planned and structured in order to drive further improvement.

The quality of teaching is improving and inadequate teaching has been eradicated. There is a coordinated and systematic approach to the monitoring of teaching. Teachers receive useful and specific feedback following lesson observations and monitoring activities. Teachers benefit from a range of effective training, visits to other schools and the opportunity to work together in pairs to improve their practice.

Gaps between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and their classmates are closing as a result of improvements in teaching. You have also reviewed the use of pupil premium funding (additional government funding) to ensure that it is used to target support in the most effective ways, for example through the provision of specialist teaching assistants and by paying for pupils to take part in school trips.

Two new governors have joined the governing body since the last inspection. This has further strengthened the governors' capacity to challenge and support the school. Governors have written a sharply focused plan to show how they will check the school's progress against key areas.

External support

The school has an effective working relationship with officers from the local authority. The local authority rightly judge the school to now require a 'light touch' of support. The local authority adviser continues to be a valuable source of challenge through her attendance at the school's termly pupil progress meetings.

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

Yours sincerely

Lisa Moore

Her Majesty's Inspector