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Mrs Lorraine Adams
Headteacher
Oxley Primary School
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Wolverhampton
WV10 9TR

Dear Mrs Adams

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Oxley Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 21 October 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 May 2015. 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 not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school. Plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement.

The school should work with the local authority and take urgent action to:

- ensure that all senior leaders check rigorously the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement, and that weaknesses are tackled swiftly
- make sure that the governing body is able to hold all school leaders to account for pupils' achievement
- ensure that teachers plan activities that meet the learning needs of pupils, including the most-able, so that they make accelerated progress, particularly in writing and mathematics
- write a school improvement plan that identifies the precise actions that will be taken to raise pupils' achievement, and strengthen teaching, leadership and

governance. This plan should contain measurable success criteria and make clear who will evaluate the impact of the actions within the plan.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met with two local authority representatives. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed, including the latest information about pupils' achievement and written feedback to teachers following observations of lessons. During this inspection visit you and the deputy headteacher joined me on visits to some classes. We talked to pupils about their learning and we looked at examples of pupils' writing and mathematics work.

Context

Three teachers left the school in the summer term. The governing body appointed one permanent teacher and one temporary teacher. They joined the school in September 2015. Two other teachers have returned from maternity leave and are working as a job share. At the time of this inspection visit, most of the teachers who were at the school during the previous inspection are now teaching in an age group different from the one they taught previously.

Main findings

You and other senior leaders have not focused enough on improving the quality of teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement. The latest achievement information for pupils currently in the school shows that the vast majority of pupils do not have the skills and knowledge expected for their age, especially in writing and mathematics.

The school improvement plan does not identify the precise actions that will be taken to strengthen teaching, pupils' achievement, leadership or governance. The success criteria within the current plan are too general and not specifically matched to the school. Additionally, the plan does not make clear who will check and evaluate that the actions taken as a result of this plan are making enough of a difference to pupils' achievement.

The systems for checking the work of teachers and pupils' achievement are ineffective. Significant weaknesses in teaching have been allowed to develop because you and other senior leaders have not made sure that all staff follow consistently the advice and guidance they receive following any training and support.

Teachers' expectations of pupils' capabilities, especially the most-able, are low. During our brief visits to lessons, we observed the most-able pupils completing

simple activities. A group of pupils told us that they often 'copy information from the board'. Work in their books confirmed this to be the case. On occasions we observed teaching assistants completing work for the pupils that need extra help. This prevented the pupils from learning.

Work in pupils' writing and mathematics books shows that in most classes the activities do not build effectively on what pupils have already learned and can do. When pupils write, they make frequent errors with spelling, punctuation and grammar. These errors often go unnoticed by teachers, so pupils continue to repeat them. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and extend their writing skills. In mathematics, the activities are often too easy and do not deepen pupils' mathematical understanding. The presentation of pupils' work remains variable. Not all teachers insist that pupils form and join their letters correctly.

At the end of Reception in 2015, the majority of boys did not reach a good level of development, particularly in writing. In response to this, staff are now planning more writing activities. However, this is not making a difference because the activities they plan fail to motivate and capture pupils' interest. We observed children avoiding the writing activities unless specifically directed to do so by an adult.

You and the deputy headteacher have identified the pupils, including the disadvantaged, who are not making enough progress. Following discussion with class teachers, you have agreed the actions that class teachers will take and the additional support that will be provided. Although this is a positive development, you are not checking that teachers are implementing the agreed actions or if the additional support is helping to ensure that pupils achieve at a more rapid rate.

Targets for the performance of staff remain imprecise. They are not focused enough on ensuring that teachers improve their practice and help different groups of pupils make better progress.

The governing body does not hold senior leaders to account effectively for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Members of the governing body are asking appropriate questions about teaching and pupils' achievement. However, they acknowledge fully that there is an over reliance on senior leaders to provide them with the information they need. They do not check the accuracy of this information for themselves.

I recommend an urgent external review of governance and an external review of the school's use of pupil premium.

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 impact of the local authority has been limited. Despite some helpful support and guidance from advisers and consultants, you and other senior leaders have been unable to make the necessary changes. You arranged for an external consultant to provide you and other senior leaders with leadership support. This support has also had a limited impact.

In September 2015, the local authority informed you of the increased level of support and challenge they are planning to provide. The local authority has already established a school improvement board. Members of the board will now meet each half term with you and the Chair of the Governing Body to check the school's progress towards becoming a good school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Wolverhampton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi
Her Majesty's Inspector