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11 February 2014

Deena Chetty
Headteacher
Bowmansgreen Primary School
Telford Road
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St Albans
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Dear Mr Chetty

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bowmansgreen Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 February 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 October 2013. 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 teachers' assessments are realistic and accurate, and validated by both internal and external moderation processes
- provide members of the governing body with suitable training to deepen their understanding of progress made by different groups of pupils so that they can provide you with an appropriate level of challenge and support.

Evidence

During the visit, I held a meeting with you, a group of pupils, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school action plan. I visited every class briefly, accompanied by you.

Context

Since the previous inspection, you have introduced a weekly monitoring group called the School Improvement Team of which you are a member as well as the leaders for literacy and numeracy. One teacher of Year 6 has left the school and has been replaced. The special educational needs co-ordinator no longer manages the pupil support base, and you have appointed an acting base leader until Easter.

Main findings

In consultation with your Hertfordshire Improvement Partner, who is also the headteacher of a school which requires improvement but where leadership was judged to be good, you have sharpened the focus of your school improvement plan so that it aims to tackle areas of weakness identified in the previous inspection. You have established a wide range of monitoring activities to ensure you meet the deadlines for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the work of the school. You are making your high expectations clear to staff and pupils alike.

The accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' progress prior to your appointment is questionable, and you have started to make better use of systems which track the progress of different groups of pupils. Targets shown to me during the visit reflect your high aspirations for your pupils, but also show that some groups of pupils have more ground to gain in some areas than do others. Your weekly school improvement team meetings aim to identify these gaps, and your work with the local authority is helping to develop teachers' understanding and accuracy of assessing pupils' progress over time. You now expect teachers to take greater responsibility for the progress made by individual pupils in their classes and for identifying strategies to close any gaps in attainment. However, these procedures are not yet embedded across the school and teachers' assessments are not yet secure.

My visits to classes and my discussion with pupils demonstrate a clear improvement in pupils' attitudes towards their learning. I saw pupils actively engaged in their learning, and teaching assistants working well with groups of pupils both inside and outside of the classroom. You have made effective gains in securing consistency of teachers' marking of pupils' work as outlined in your revised marking policy, and in ensuring pupils respond regularly to their teachers' marking. Pupils told me they find this aspect of teaching particularly helpful in supporting them to move up to the next level of attainment. Your information on pupils' attendance also shows an upward trend.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body were unable to attend my discussion about governance, although the Chair was able to attend the final feedback session. The governors with whom I met were positive about your impact as the new headteacher. They are developing an improved understanding of the barriers to pupils' progress by attending the weekly school improvement team meetings. They acknowledge the need to develop their understanding of information related to

pupils' achievement and the on-going need to offer an appropriate balance of challenge and support.

External support

You are positive about the support of the local authority and welcome the support and guidance of the Hertfordshire Improvement Partner. The local authority has worked well with the school in providing training and support for literacy and numeracy as well as working with the leader of the EYFS. Newly-appointed governors speak positively about the induction programme to help them understand the crucial role they play in driving school improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

John Daniell
Her Majesty's Inspector