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Mr Anthony Hadfield
Headteacher
Overleigh St Mary's CE Primary School
Old Wrexham Road
Handbridge
Chester
Cheshire
CH4 7HS

Dear Mr Hadfield

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Overleigh St Mary's CE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 17 January 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders, governors, a group of pupils and a representative of the local authority (LA). The inspector evaluated a range of documentation including: the school improvement plan, monitoring reports and action plans. In addition, the headteacher and deputy headteacher took the HMI on a tour of the school to look briefly at teaching and learning and the changes made to provision since the last inspection.

Context

There have been no significant changes to staff or the school's organisation since the inspection.

Main findings

Senior leaders and governors accept that the areas for improvement from the recent inspection are the right ones for the school. As a group, they have responded positively to the school's priorities and have taken immediate action to :

- establish a more rigorous system for monitoring the quality of provision
- improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress
- develop the quality of pupils' learning
- strengthen the roles of middle leaders
- increase teachers' understanding of pupil progress data.

The school improvement plan has been realigned and is suitably underpinned by separate action plans that identify completed tasks, evidence of impact and next steps. However, some of the planned actions within the plan do not have clear milestones or success criteria against which progress can be measured. This means it is not always clear how senior leaders and governors will ensure that the school's actions are making a difference to pupils' learning and their progress.

Members of the governing body know why the school is not yet good. As a group, they understand what is being done to improve provision and are increasingly aware of the links between pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. There is scope to increase their confidence to act as a critical friend and hold senior leaders to account.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- fine-tune the school improvement plan to identify more precisely how the school will measure its success

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The LA recognises that its support for the school has been slow to emerge since the inspection in November. No training or planned action has taken place as yet. However, the newly appointed school improvement partner has clear plans in mind to better support the school in the months ahead. This includes training for governors and support for senior leaders and teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood
Her Majesty's Inspector