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18 January 2013

Mrs S Taylor
Victoria Road Primary School
Victoria Road
Runcorn
Cheshire
WA7 5BN

Dear Mrs Taylor

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Victoria Road Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 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 senior leaders, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated and the school's monitoring records were considered. The inspector was taken on a tour of the school to meet staff and pupils.

Context

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

Main findings

The school is addressing the issues identified at the recent inspection with gusto. There is no complacency which means the determination to become a good school pervades the whole building. The pace of change is brisk but measured which has

captured the commitment of staff. The drive for improvement is underpinned by thorough planning, which is helping the school tackle shortcomings vigorously. Although there are relevant actions in place for improving governance, these do not match the precision and detail evident in the rest of the plan.

Raising pupils' achievement and improving teaching are top priority. Teachers' skills are being refreshed because training is well matched to need and appropriate support is in place to help teachers who need extra help to improve. Aspirations have been raised so many teachers are being encouraged to improve their practice so it is better than good. Lessons are frequently observed and teachers benefit from expert feedback which identifies what they need to do next to become even better.

Senior leaders have the support and commitment of the governing body. Governors have a greater insight into the work of the school because of the good quality information they receive and the clarity of the school development plan which is helping them to keep track of the school's progress. Governors agree they would benefit from an external review of their effectiveness to help identify their strengths and weaknesses so future training is precisely matched to their needs.

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 recommends that further action is taken to:

- review the school development plan to ensure the actions relating to the governing body match the excellent quality in the rest of the plan
- use the support of the local authority to commission an external review of the governing body so governors can identify their strengths and weaknesses and plan training accordingly.

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

External support

The local authority is continuing to provide extensive support to the school. It is offering guidance to teachers and leaders as well as providing financial assistance to help the school make the best of their resources. Good use is being made of an external consultant to develop the role of other leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanne Olsson
Her Majesty's Inspector