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Mr Matt De Freitas
Hawes Down Junior School
The Mead
West Wickham
BR4 0BA

Dear Mr De Freitas

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hawes Down Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 6 June, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and other senior and middle leaders. I also held a meeting with the Chair of the Governing Body, the Vice Chair and two other governors. I evaluated the school improvement plans and related documentation. I carried out a tour of the school with you, to see it at work.

Context

Since the last inspection the deputy headteacher has returned to work following a leave of absence. There are three fewer governors than at the time of the inspection.

Main findings

You, senior leaders and governors have responded very constructively to the findings of the last inspection. In response to the inspection recommendations you have developed good quality action plans to tackle all the identified areas for

development. These have quantified milestones to track success and make clear the role of governors in monitoring this.

You and your senior leaders have worked with staff to increase the challenge for pupils, in target setting and in teaching. You and the governing body have changed performance management processes. Staff know they have to meet challenging targets for pupils' progress to ensure salary progression. The increase in individual and whole school targets has raised expectations for staff and pupils. You have worked with senior leaders to simplify the school's information systems for assessment data and revised the cycle of pupil assessment. This is allowing teachers to make better use of assessment information to plan challenging activities for all the pupils in their classes and to intervene if any pupils are falling behind. School assessment information shows that pupils are making more rapid progress. You, governors and senior leaders are aware that there are a few remaining groups of pupils in some year groups that need to make better progress.

Staff meetings and visits to good and outstanding schools have been used to develop teachers' awareness of what good and outstanding teaching looks like. A 'buddy' system, peer observation and leaders guidance to staff has improved the sharing of best teaching practice. A review of marking practice has resulted in more purposeful marking. A firm expectation has been established that pupils act on teachers' suggestions for improvement. This is now seen in all classes. Pupils speaking to governors have reported how beneficial they find the new ways of marking. Parents have been fully involved in these changes. They were invited to an evening meeting and were taken through the rationale behind the school's new approaches.

You have increased the frequency of monitoring of teachers' work. The curriculum for mathematics and literacy has been reviewed to build in more real-life opportunities for pupils to use their skills. Mathematics and literacy leaders have been given more time to work with teachers and visit other schools to improve the teaching practice in school. They are not yet using published information on best practice in teaching literacy and mathematics, such as Ofsted's reports.

The governing body has commissioned a review of its work and undertaken training on using achievement data to hold leaders to account. As a result governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors believe that they have significantly increased their challenge to the school, and you and your senior leaders concur.

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:

- make use of published information on best practice in teaching literacy and mathematics, such as those found in Ofsted's reports.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has provided some funding for a consultant who is working effectively with the school. The governing body and senior leaders have forged links with several good and outstanding schools to carry out visits. This has been beneficial to school improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Gale

Her Majesty's Inspector