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27 September 2013

Mrs Nicola Foulds
Headteacher
Bradley CofE Primary School
Yew Tree Lane
Bradley
DE6 1PG

Dear Mrs Foulds

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bradley CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 26 September 2013, 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 June 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:

- improve your school improvement plan by including more regular and specific measures of success so that governors and leaders can judge whether pupils' achievement and teaching are improving quickly enough
- focus more specifically on the root causes of underachievement in mathematics by providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their reasoning skills by solving problems.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, a member of the governing body, a group of Year 6 pupils and a representative from the local authority. We conducted a tour of the school. I evaluated your plans for improvement and considered

documentation relating to the monitoring of teaching. I reviewed your most recent data on pupils' progress and attainment. I looked at a range of pupils' work and considered the quality of their learning, particularly in English and mathematics. I evaluated the quality of marking. I scrutinised minutes of meetings of the governing body.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, the long-serving headteacher has retired. You commenced your role as headteacher in September 2013.

Main findings

You have quickly energised governors, staff and pupils to be fully involved in improving the school. You have raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and staff are left in no doubt about what you expect to see in their practice. Pupils spoke excitedly about the improvements which are taking place. They described how lessons are more interesting because they are being given work which constantly challenges them. Pupils showed me that they now have to respond to teachers' comments in their books and how this is helping them to improve their work. Pupils say that they are more motivated to learn because they have a clearer understanding of what they have to do to achieve their targets. Pupils showed me how they are given more opportunities to apply their skills in writing across a wider range of subjects. Pupils told me that they are given more opportunities to work independently and that this is increasing their enjoyment of learning. These changes show that teaching is improving and having a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning.

You have introduced a new tracking system which has been effective in making governors and staff more aware of how well pupils are progressing. Consequently, they know that pupils in Key Stage 2 are not making the same rates of progress in mathematics as they are in English. This is because pupils are not being provided with enough opportunities to develop their reasoning skills by solving mathematical problems.

Governors have evaluated their own performance, even before the planned external review of governance is undertaken. As a result, they are providing greater support and challenge to senior leaders. Governors have set more challenging targets relating to what they expect pupils to achieve by the end of the year. They have supported you in drawing up an appropriate action plan. However, measures of success cited in the plan are not frequent or specific enough to help governors check whether the current pace of improvement is being sustained.

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 organised support which is provided by a school improvement partner, who is also a practising headteacher. This has been effective in enabling you to make a positive start in your new role.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Diocesan Director of Education for Derby, and the Director of Children's Services for Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely

David Carter

Her Majesty's Inspector