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17 October 2013

Mr N Addison
Headteacher
Ash Green Primary School
The Lea
Trentham
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
ST4 8BX

Dear Mr Addison

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ash Green Primary School, Stoke-On-Trent

Following my visit to your school on 16 October 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 May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- ensure that the plan for improvement contains quantifiable time-scaled targets for the achievement of all groups of pupils
- implement fully, and as a matter of urgency, the individual teaching improvement plans so that teaching is consistently good across the school.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, your deputy headteacher, three governors including the Chair and Vice-Chair, the headteacher of the support school and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plans were evaluated. The inspector and headteacher jointly visited all classes, looked at samples of pupils' books and held discussions with a small number of pupils about their work. A joint lesson observation was undertaken with the deputy headteacher.

Context

One teacher has been absent through illness from the start of this term. To cover this absence, the governors have increased the hours of a part-time member of the school staff.

Main findings

The progress made since the school was deemed to require improvement has been too slow. As shown through the recently undertaken external review of the quality of teaching and learning, there remains much to be improved. There has been insufficient progress in ensuring that all teachers provide sufficient challenge for the more-able pupils. Although a new marking policy has been introduced and discussed with staff, the quality of teachers' marking still remains inconsistent. The headteacher of the support school reports that the work that she is undertaking with two of your teachers is beginning to have a positive impact on improving the quality of their teaching. However, this support only started at the beginning of this term, and valuable time was lost. The post-Ofsted improvement plan addresses all the main issues, but there are no targets which show the planned achievement of different groups of pupils.

Although they have yet to have significant impact on improving teaching and raising achievement, the school has introduced a number of new initiatives. For example, a new system for tracking pupils' progress is allowing the school's leaders and teachers to check on individual and group progress in a much clearer way. Your deputy headteacher has received training to improve his skills in lesson observation and you have organised training sessions for staff on how to improve their teaching. The external review of teaching and learning has enabled the school to begin to implement teaching improvement programmes for individual members of staff. It is essential that these programmes are fully implemented as a matter of urgency and the time-scale for their successful implementation is set within the context of the main improvement plan. Ensuring that all groups of pupils make good progress through consistently good or better teaching remains the school's main focus.

Governors are highly committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve well as soon as possible. The external review of the effectiveness of the governing body is now complete and governors are working well to implement the plan for improvement. Governors have received local authority training on the use of the school's assessment data to monitor pupils' progress and also on their roles and responsibilities. As a result, they are beginning to hold senior leaders to account more effectively and are providing senior leaders with a greater degree of challenge than in the past.

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 clear support to the school through commissioning a teaching and learning review, brokering links with a local outstanding school and giving guidance and training. The local authority has agreed to commission another review of

teaching and learning to be carried out at the start of next term and to monitor the reliability and effectiveness of the school's new assessment systems.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Stoke-On-Trent.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers
Her Majesty's Inspector