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28 February 2014

Ann Broughton
Headteacher
Bedfont Primary School
Hatton Road
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Dear Mrs Broughton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bedfont Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 28 February 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 second 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.

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

- improve the quality of work in pupils' books and ensure that marking challenges all pupils to achieve harder work
- ensure that all judgements about the typicality of teaching over time place greater emphasis upon the scrutiny of pupils' progress in their books as well as observations of teaching
- increase quickly governors skills so that they scrutinise and challenge progress of different pupil groups such as those supported by pupil premium
- work with the local authority to establish a partnership with an outstanding school to secure more rapid improvement in teaching.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you and your senior leaders, members of the governing body, and a group of middle leaders. I spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority. I evaluated your school improvement plan, reviewed minutes of governing body meetings and scrutinised pupils' work. We briefly visited lessons together to observe teaching, scrutinise marking and consider pupils' attitudes to learning.

Context

Since the first monitoring inspection several teachers have left the school; 13 new teachers have joined the school since September 2013. A new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed two days before this monitoring inspection.

Main findings

You have reviewed the school development plan and you have put in place better systems to gather and analyse data about pupils' achievement. You and your senior leaders are undertaking more regular scrutiny of pupils' work and training your middle leaders to do the same. Despite these developments the results in 2013 were disappointing and pupils did not do as well as expected. In particular pupils made much less progress in reading than expected and more able pupils did not reach the higher levels they were capable of by the end of Key Stage 2.

You have reviewed the teaching of reading. Actions taken have included giving more structure to guided reading time. Your school data shows that overall, gains are being made but gaps are still not closing quickly enough between the progress of pupils supported by pupil premium and that of their peers.

During our visit to lessons we looked carefully pupils' progress, including at the quality of work over time in their books. The picture of achievement in writing and mathematics is varied, as it is in the teaching of topic work for science, religious studies and geography. The quality of marking is also inconsistent. Pupils who care about their work present it neatly and take pride in responding to feedback. They really want to learn well and are eager for greater challenge. Some pupils do not respond to cursory marking. Praise that is generous is not helping all pupils to improve their work.

Examples of good quality marking that challenges pupils to try harder work can be found in one set of Year 6 mathematics books. Progress in mathematics is improving but not all teachers are exploiting the good training led by your senior leader for mathematics. Some Year 6 pupils say work is too easy in lessons and some understand their current level of achievement and targets for English and mathematics but others do not.

Planning and teaching in Year 3, 4 and 5 classes is still not good enough. We observed teachers checking pupils' understanding and a few instances of quick fire questions to extend pupils responses, such as the Year 4 lesson probing morals and messages in fairy tales. The quality of teaching in other extracts we watched failed to stretch the most able. In one class the teaching skimmed over pupils' understanding of alliteration, similes and rhyming without checking which pupils were struggling and needed more help. Several pupils were inattentive in classes we visited because they either struggled with the work or were finding it too easy.

The quality of writing in Key Stage 1 and 2 is not improving quickly enough because not all teaching is guiding pupils to know how to plan and develop their ideas. Teaching misses opportunities to develop writing through questions to lead to extended writing. The brightest pupils do this unaided, produce thoughtful work and marking helps improve their literacy work. Others are doing less well because they need an outline plan to help them write effectively.

The mixed picture of progress in books and variations in teaching do not support leaders, governors or the local authority view of the percentage of teaching that is typically good. There is an over reliance on lesson observations as a key indicator of quality despite senior leaders working hard to examine books.

The local authority rightly points to improving governance in response to the external review. However, governors do not have a sufficiently detailed understanding of how quickly gaps in pupils' achievement are closing compared with national expectations. Governors are developing their understanding of what they need to improve in response to the external review and are improving their challenge about staff pay and progression.

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 supported you to improve your development plan and in the autumn term was working with you to analyse achievement data. This is not tight enough in examining the progress of pupil groups by gender, ethnicity and those supported by the pupil premium. The local authority judges that the school is progressing well and that teaching is improving. However, evidence from this second monitoring inspection does not support this. This is for two key reasons; teaching observations and scrutiny of pupils' work are not sufficiently focused on the progress of pupil groups; the level of challenge in marking does not stretch the most able pupils.

You have bought in external support to improve the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is starting to help your leaders review and improve assessment and model best practice for teachers. You are also making good use of the local authority cluster meetings for the Early Years Foundation Stage to help you test out the accuracy of your judgements about pupils' progress.

Your work with a local school last year began to support middle leaders and newly qualified teachers. However a brokered formal partnership with an outstanding school has not happened. You are seeking further opportunities to get to grips with what constitutes typically good and outstanding practice in other schools. This is an urgent priority to quickly enhance leadership and teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanna Beckford-Hall
Her Majesty's Inspector