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Vanessa Thomas
Shelley Primary School
Milton Crescent, Shelley
Ongar
CM5 0FF

Dear Mrs Thomas

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Shelley Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 March 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in December 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

You 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 governance more rapidly by
 - formulating a clear action plan
 - agreeing specific time-lines for the training of governors
 - linking strategies for effective governance more coherently to the school's improvement plan
- make sure that evaluation focuses on outcomes for pupils.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you and the chair of governors. I spoke to the local authority adviser and evaluated the improvement plan. We jointly went into lessons and spoke to pupils about their work. I looked at a range of documentation, including your monitoring of teaching, your work on improving behaviour and your new tracking system to check pupils' progress.

Context

You became headteacher of the school in January 2014. A new teacher also joined in January to teach the Year 1/2 class for two days per week. One teacher is leaving at Easter and this post is being advertised.

Main findings

You are using a range of strategies to ensure that the school becomes a good or better school as quickly as possible. A key strength of your approach is your relentless focus on improving teaching and attitudes to learning. You have constructed a useful post-Ofsted improvement plan, although, during my visit, we discussed the difference between monitoring and evaluation. You need to ensure that the evaluation of your actions focusses on outcomes for pupils. Your own work with teachers, through lesson observations and work scrutiny, is likely to improve teaching to good or outstanding because your coaching is expertly done and sufficiently challenging to raise expectations. It does indicate precisely to staff, including learning support assistants, what they should do differently to accelerate pupils' progress. I saw some good practice in the use of your '*Star System*', for example, with pupils very clear about what it meant. I also noted positive developments in the management of pupils' behaviour using the '*Triangle*' process. The pupils I spoke to were very proud to tell me about their work and they know what to do to make it even better. The professional development of staff is given high importance and is relevant to the school's needs.

Governors are committed but their intended actions are not brought together into a coherent plan. Their robust review of the progress made on the key issues identified at the inspection is slow to start. You provide governors with data on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning. However, there is limited evidence that governors challenge your findings. Governors are planning to visit the school more often but these intentions are not cross-referenced to the school's improvement plan. To date, only one focused visit has taken place. A review of governance due to take place in February is now planned for May 2014. The local authority adviser will be meeting with the chair of governors every 6 weeks as part of the improvement board and I shall liaise with her to check progress. I shall also try to attend the meeting of the full governing body in July.

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 teacher in the Early Years Foundation Stage has already benefitted from her visit to an outstanding practitioner. You welcome the local authority support and challenge. You are on the '*Early Headship*' programme and belong to a local delivery group keeping you informed of professional matters.

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

Yours sincerely

Marianick Ellender-Gelé
Her Majesty's Inspector