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Mrs Jennie Matthewman
Boney Hay Primary School
Chorley Road
Burntwood
WS7 2PF

Dear Mrs Matthewman

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Boney Hay Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 9 May 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 February 2014. 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:

- ensure that governors are clearly and fully involved in monitoring the school's progress so that they have an independent view of how the school is moving forward, and that questions and challenges are clearly recorded in minutes and other documentation
- ensure that the school's development plan clearly differentiates objectives and actions so that governors are able to monitor progress against areas for improvement.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and your assistant headteacher, members of the Governing Body and the Local Leader of Education commissioned by the local authority to support the school. A telephone meeting was held with a

representative of the local authority, a work scrutiny was completed and a number of short visits made to lessons. The school improvement plans were evaluated.

Context

There have been no changes to staffing since the last inspection. However, the school is expecting to recruit a literacy co-ordinator and a class teacher for September 2014.

Main findings

You are taking effective and urgent action to move the school forward. School leaders, governors and staff have responded positively to the Ofsted inspection judgement and there has been a focused drive to ensure that sustained improvement is secured as rapidly as possible.

The school's documentation is well-focused on the improvements required. Plans clearly identify who is responsible, providing success criteria and realistic interim milestones. However, in some cases there needs to be more clarity about the specific action to be taken to achieve the improvement and how this action links to the area for improvement identified in the Ofsted report. This will enable governors to monitor the impact of actions more effectively.

You have taken decisive action to address the key issue of the quality of marking. You have reviewed and improved the whole school policy and have ensured that all staff address this as a priority. During the visit, pupils' books across all year groups, abilities and subjects were scrutinised and clear evidence was seen that all staff are applying the new policy and that children are responding well to 'fix it' time. Although this is very new, evidence is that it has rapidly become embedded in every day practice. This is because you have made expectations absolutely clear and have carefully checked that these are met. However, as may be expected at this point, there is still some variability in the quality of comments made. For instance, some comments about what has been done well or what needs to be addressed are too general so that they do not identify the skill that has been achieved or needs further attention.

The introduction of daily mathematics meetings in all year groups is beginning to have an impact. A recent local authority review included observations of these sessions and it was noted that they were delivered effectively by most teachers. The school plans to introduce a new mathematics programme in September to further enhance the quality of mathematics teaching. Training is to take place in September for all staff.

You have a clear view of where weaknesses in teaching remain, which has been verified by external reviews. Appropriate training and support has been provided where necessary and this is beginning to have a positive effect so that the school

reports an increase in the percentage of good or better teaching. The expected new appointments are seen as an opportunity to further strengthen the teaching team.

The organisation of pupil progress meetings has been reviewed. These are now designed to ensure that staff are held more fully to account. For instance, all teachers are now expected to produce and analyse data for their classes and to account for any underperformance. There is a clear link to performance management targets, so that staff are very clear that outcomes for pupils are their responsibility.

On-going assessment is being developed to ensure that it is used more effectively to inform planning and pupil targets. For instance, teaching assistants are monitoring and reporting on speaking and listening in whole class sessions on a daily basis, so that work can be better matched to pupils' abilities. However, although books showed that all pupils had appropriate targets, there was little evidence that teachers were planning tasks of different levels of difficulty to match the abilities of pupils. Consequently, this remains an area for development.

Governors have responded very positively to the previous inspection judgements. They have carried out an audit of skills and requested training where identified as necessary. All governors are now linked to a year group and many spend a significant amount of time with their cohorts. As a result of this and an improved understanding of the data, governors are now very clear about how the school is doing and what the next steps need to be.

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 is providing effective support through reviews of progress made each half term and the commissioning of an LLE to provide support. This includes training for governors.

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

Yours sincerely

Mel Ford
Her Majesty's Inspector