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Mr John Howells
Headteacher
Hogarth Primary School
Riseway
Off Hogarth Avenue
Brentwood
Essex
CM15 8BG

Dear Mr Howells

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hogarth Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 3 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 January 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you and deputy headteacher, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I also looked at the school's records of pupils' achievement, local authority monitoring reports and the recent review of governance. We jointly observed teaching in all eight classes.

Context

You have announced your intention to retire from teaching, and following interviews of a strong field of candidates, the current deputy headteacher has been appointed

headteacher designate. She will take up her new post in September. A new deputy headteacher has also been appointed for September.

Main findings

You and other senior leaders have already in put in place a number of improvements since the last inspection. Following the inspection the school produced a detailed improvement plan which is link to the broad Ofsted areas for improvement. One weakness is that the plan does not contain actions linked explicitly to all of the areas for improvement, for example how the school will share best practice across classes. While there are clear targets for pupils' progress in the improvement plan, they do not reflect the school's increased ambition for how well pupils should do. While you sensibly update targets and what the school intends to do, attainment targets are based on pupils making nationally expected progress rather than the good progress the school is aiming for. In addition, the school's evaluations of the impact of its actions are not always easy to understand.

The progress pupils make in lessons is beginning to improve. This is because the quality of teaching is improving. More is now good or better. Teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. Learning Support Assistants continue to make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They play a key role in checking on how well pupils are doing and make sure everyone works hard. Much of the teaching is lively and engaging. While teachers usually explain to pupils what they are expected to learn, their descriptions can be too vague and do not always match what pupils actually do. Sometimes activities are not explained carefully enough so that fundamental misunderstandings can occur.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and are able to work with sustained concentration. They are confident, eager to answer questions and to work collaboratively. Even the youngest respond enthusiastically when asked to discuss their answers. Most teachers use a good range of questions to keep pupils on task and test their understanding. However, some are too quick to answer their own questions when pupils do not respond, rather than prompting them to answer or to answer more fully. Attendance of pupils eligible for the pupil premium has risen, and so too has attendance overall.

Those pupils currently in Year 6 are predicted to do better this year than last, particularly in reading and mathematics. More able pupils are expected to do better in reading, writing and mathematics. While the school tracks the progress of individual pupils very carefully it does not track sufficiently carefully the progress of groups of pupils such as those supported through the pupil premium, boys, girls and pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs. This limits the ability of the governing body to exercise its duty of strategic oversight and hold the school fully to account for pupils' achievement.

The governing body nonetheless plays an important role in school improvement. It diligently monitors the school improvement plan and is increasingly well placed to

ask probing questions about pupils' achievement. Governors would be better able to do this if some of the success criteria in the action plan were more easily measured and the link between planned actions and pupils' achievement was more explicit. A range of professional development has been put in place for staff across the school, including support to improve the quality of lesson observations and teaching.

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 school has valued support from the local authority in establishing an overview of the quality of teaching and learning, and in drawing up the post-Ofsted action plan. The local authority view of the quality of teaching is accurate and feedback provided is succinct and useful. Governors speak positively about support from governor services and about the advice given in appointing the new headteacher and deputy headteacher.

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

Yours sincerely

Robert Lovett
Her Majesty's Inspector