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19 June 2014

Nigel Pantling
Headteacher
Mundella Primary School
Black Bull Road
Folkestone
CT19 5QX

Dear Mr Pantling

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Mundella Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 19 June, 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 March 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 the school improvement plan clearly identify the precise improvements expected in the progress of different groups of pupils at key points
- simplify the teaching and learning policy and provide practical examples of what is required so that all teachers are clear about what is expected of them
- systematically record and evaluate information on the quality of teaching so the extent to which improvements are becoming routine and where further action is needed are understood.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and other senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I scrutinised a range of documents including the school's action plans and information about pupils' progress. We briefly visited lessons around the school to see teaching and learning.

Context

Since the last inspection two teachers have left and two newly qualified teachers have recently taken up post. From the end of this month an assistant headteacher has been seconded to the school to take the lead on improving teaching and learning.

Main findings

You and your senior leaders have responded positively to the findings and recommendations of the previous inspection. Your improvement plan contains well considered actions and you are tackling the tasks with energy and enthusiasm. However, the plan does not clearly identify the precise improvements expected in the progress of different groups of pupils at key points. Without these measures it will not be clear to you and your governors whether actions are making enough of a difference to pupils' progress.

You have worked with your staff to revisit the school's teaching and learning policy and reminded them of the basic requirements of good teaching. You check regularly on the quality of teaching and provide staff with constructive feedback and guidance to help them improve. Teachers are given helpful opportunities to observe and reflect on good practice in your own and other local schools. You acted swiftly to improve teaching where it was needed most. This has led to some changes in staffing. At present the success with which teachers are responding to support and adapting their practice is variable. For example, in lessons we visited pupils were sometimes not clear about what they were learning, how well they were doing or how to improve. In some instances pupils were not able to concentrate as activities were not carefully planned. Some teachers need more help to effectively put the teaching and learning policy into practice. Information about teaching quality is not routinely recorded and shared so the impact of training and next steps needed are not always identified and responded to as quickly as they could be. You have seconded a senior leader to be responsible for improving teaching and learning and are planning to develop the leadership of mathematics and English to put this right and strengthen the school's leadership.

You are working well to tackle poor attendance. Your focus on hygiene is helping reduce the number of pupils off sick and improved approaches to rewarding good attendance are starting to take effect.

The governing body recognise the challenges ahead. Governors are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They continue to challenge and hold you to account for pupil achievement and teaching quality. The governing body strategy group, created earlier this year, is helping to keep a sharper and more frequent focus on what needs to improve.

External support

You value the support the local authority is now providing. An educational consultant visits regularly, providing you with appropriate support and challenge and the specialist teaching and learning service is supporting your work to improve behaviour. The school's involvement in a local school improvement partnership provides useful opportunities to share good practice.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Corporate Director of Education, Learning and Skills for Kent.

Yours sincerely

Diana Choulerton
Her Majesty's Inspector