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Mrs Vivienne Stevens
Headteacher
Hinguar Community Primary School
New Garrison Road
Shoeburyness
SS3 9FE

Dear Mrs Stevens

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hinguar Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 17 September 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 May 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, meetings were held 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. The school action plan was evaluated. We jointly observed teaching and learning in all of the classes. I spoke to pupils informally in classrooms, on the playground at playtime and while being given a guided tour of the school. I also spoke to parents attending the first of this term's coffee mornings. I looked at a range of pupils' books.

Context

Since the last inspection report, a new special educational needs coordinator and finance manager have been appointed. One teacher has left the school and two part-time teachers have joined.

Main findings

Staffing has stabilised. The detrimental impact of high levels of staff turnover reported in May is no longer affecting pupils' progress. The school is now more settled and cohesive.

Early indications are that the revised curriculum, which focuses on the application of key skills in a range of subjects, is having a galvanising effect on both pupils, and adults. Important skills learned through the explicit teaching of grammar, spelling and punctuation are used in writing about the ancient Egyptians or the dynamic nature of physical geography. Key mathematics skills are also being applied in other subjects. Pupils are very enthusiastic about this cross-curricular approach to learning. To judge by some of the excellent home produced volcanoes and Egyptian pyramids on display around the school, parents are equally enthusiastic and engaged. Pupils and staff say they are also enjoying new opportunities for classes to work together. Where this was observed, pupils collaborated and concentrated very well. Early indications from pupils' books indicate that the new curriculum and raised expectations are beginning to improve outcomes, although some of the older pupils are not yet using a joined style of handwriting or forming letters consistently well.

Younger children also work very well together and strengths reported in the last inspection report continue.

Unvalidated test and assessment results for last year's Year 6 pupils indicate that attainment is rising and progress accelerating, particularly in reading and writing. Although attainment is also rising in mathematics, this remains the weakest area of the school's work. The school is aware of the need to improve outcomes in mathematics and has introduced a range of strategies to raise standards.

The new behaviour policy focuses on pupils' readiness to learn and on building high expectations. All of the pupils and staff spoken to say it is already having a positive impact. Pupils are polite and friendly. They move around the school, including up and down the stairs, calmly and sensibly. On the field and playground pupils play together well. They say the school is happy and welcoming, with a pupil new to the school saying she had settled quickly in her new class.

Parents say that the partnership with the school is improving. One said she particularly welcomes early notice of school events as it makes it more likely she can attend. Parents feel increasingly involved in their children's learning and warmly welcome further opportunities to work with their children in the classroom. The

school is keen to develop this relationship and make better use of the skills and experience of parents, grandparents and the wider community. While some improvements are already evident, such as the increasing use of text and email to communicate with parents, the school could have been quicker to let parents know how it was going to respond to the inspection report.

The school has written a detailed action plan intended to address the issues from the last inspection report. While it is generally fit for purpose, some success criteria are not sufficiently focused on how well the school's actions are intended to impact on pupils' achievement. Others are not success criteria at all, simply actions the school intends to take.

Governors know the school well. They visit regularly, make themselves readily available to speak to parents and are eager for the school to improve. They recognise that the school action plan can be improved so that they can hold the school more fully to account. They spoke confidently about improvements in pupils' achievement and in the quality of 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 is working with a successful local school to build capacity and share best practice. Teachers speak positively about this developing relationship. Senior leaders and governors have valued the local authority support they have received to date and are eager to further strengthen this joint working. They recognise the need for planned support to be delivered in a timely manner.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Southend-on-Sea.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lovett
Her Majesty's Inspector