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Gavin Winters
Headteacher
Victoria Junior School
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Feltham
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Dear Mr Winters

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Victoria Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 15 October 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 July 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other leaders, and three governors to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school's improvement plan was evaluated. We visited lessons to observe teaching and learning, and look at pupils' work. We conducted a focussed scrutiny of some work from pupils in Year 4. I held discussions with three teachers and six pupils from Years 3 to 6. I held a discussion with a representative from the local authority.

Context

One senior leader left the school in August. You have appointed a temporary middle leader and redeployed other senior leaders to cover the responsibilities of this position.

Main findings

The school's improvement plan presents relevant and clear actions which respond to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Though it is always clear what impact these actions aim to achieve, a small number do not clearly express when they will have impact. The plan makes it very clear who will lead and monitor particular actions. However, leaders' and governors' roles in evaluating the success of some these actions are not explicit enough.

You have raised your expectations of the level of challenge teachers provide for pupils. As a result of the training provided for teachers, some activities now offer a good challenge for all pupils. However, not enough teaching achieves this consistently. You have restructured teaching groups to ensure that the most able pupils are expected to reach the highest levels in mathematics. This is helping teachers of all groups set work that demands more of the pupils. Pupils of all abilities comment that mathematics provides more consistent challenge than other subjects.

You have introduced non-negotiable standards for teachers and pupils. Consequently, pupils are very clear about what is expected of them in their written work. Teachers understand what is required of their marking to help pupils improve. The presentation of most pupils' work has improved significantly because teachers are challenging work that falls below the required standard. Marking consistently seeks to set pupils new challenges during focussed improvement time. However, the quality of this marking is still varied and consequently, some feedback offers limited opportunity for pupils to improve. Similarly, some pupils do not make best use of focussed improvement time.

Leaders have improved their approach to observing lessons and scrutinising pupils' work. More leaders are involved in checks which focus on the impact of teaching on learning and give greater attention to specific areas for improvement. Consequently, they have a clearer picture of how to support teachers' practice. Teachers can see the impact that this improved feedback is having on their practice.

Governors have sought an external review from a National Leader of Governance so that a high quality review can be undertaken. Although this has delayed the external review, which is now scheduled to take place in December, it has not impeded improvements to governance. For example, governors have reviewed their skills to ensure that new appointments to vacant positions bring additional expertise.

Governors have explored rigorously the outcomes of Year 6 pupils in 2014 and consequently, have a clear understanding of how well pupils have done in comparison with national averages. Governors also have robust plans in place to ensure that future decisions about pay awards are firmly rooted in how well pupils achieve.

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 has committed to supporting the school for two days each term over the coming academic year. Recent work has ensured that senior and middle leaders' monitoring and evaluation maintains a sharp focus on the impact of teaching on learning. Consequently, leaders are clear about the aspects of teaching are which are strong and those which need to improve further. Local authority support for teachers is contributing to more frequent challenge for pupils in some lessons.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Pennington
Her Majesty's Inspector