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Mrs H Powell
Headteacher
Winnersh Primary School
Greenwood Grove
Winnersh
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG41 5LH

Dear Mrs Powell

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Winnersh Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 12 September 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 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. The school should take further action to:

- make sure your action plan defines the changes in practice and improvements expected in the progress of different groups of pupils at key points in the future, so you can evaluate the effectiveness of the plan over time
- analyse and report to governors the proportions of different groups of pupils who make expected or better progress so they are aware of any variations and hold you to account for eliminating them.

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 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

A new deputy head took up post in June. The teacher responsible for the education of disabled children and those with special educational needs (SENCO) is on maternity leave and another member of staff is covering this post. A data manager has been appointed to support the senior leadership team. Five teachers have left and five new teachers have joined the school. All teachers are now permanent members of staff.

Main findings

You have taken a range of appropriate and prompt actions in response to the findings in the previous inspection report. Changes made have helped you to focus more intensely on improving teaching. The new deputy headteacher works closely with phase leaders and their teams to improve planning and teaching. The timetable has been adjusted to give teachers time to work together. The person responsible for disabled children and those with special education needs has more time for the role. Better analysis of the needs of this group now takes place. The effectiveness of the support they receive has been reviewed. Sensibly, support sessions are now more frequent and shorter. You have changed your approach to teaching mathematics and writing. You have bought practical apparatus for all classes to help pupils' understanding of mathematics. Teachers have attended comprehensive training to enable them to use the equipment effectively and improve their mathematical knowledge. Lessons on writing are now based on an approach proven to be successful in other schools. The new marking policy addresses the areas for improvement clearly and succinctly. We saw teachers using these new approaches consistently during our visits to lessons.

Your action plan needs sharpening for it to be an effective document for driving school improvement. It lists suitable actions but does not define the precise improvements in pupil progress expected at key points in time. The plan also does not include targets for closing gaps in progress between different groups of pupils, such as those eligible for pupil premium funding. When analysing pupils' progress, you are not considering the proportions of pupils in each group that make or should make expected or better progress, in comparison with other groups. This can mask underachievement and lead to inaccurate evaluation.

Governors have strengths recognised in the previous inspection report. Since then the governing body has reviewed the ways in which it works and decided these are suitable. However, governors have not challenged you well enough to make sure that the action plan is a useful document for evaluating progress overtime. They have also not set clear targets for closing the gaps in achievement of different groups of pupils. You have an external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding scheduled for 19 September. Governors and senior leaders should take full account of its findings and adjust current plans as necessary.

External support

A local authority officer checks your progress through regular visits and school improvement board meetings. The officer knows the school well and you value the support they provide. This has included helpful training for teachers on the use of questioning to challenge pupils more effectively. However, the support given to develop your action plan did not identify the weaknesses mentioned above.

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

Yours sincerely

Diana Choulerton
Her Majesty's Inspector