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10 February 2015

Mrs Susan Garner,
The Headteacher
Mead Primary School
Amersham Road
Romford
RM3 9JD

Dear Mrs Garner

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Mead Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 February 2015, 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 October 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 the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Short visits were made to twelve classes, as I toured the school with you. I also met with a group of pupils and talked to others informally during visits to classrooms. The school's action plan and a range of other documents were evaluated.

Context

Since the last full inspection no teachers have left the school. However, the headteacher will be leaving the school at the end of the spring term. Governors have already appointed her successor to take up post in the summer term. A small number of teachers are also leaving the school at Easter. The Chair and Vice Chair of the governing body, both previous members of the governing body, are new to their roles since the last inspection.

Main findings

You have taken quick action to set a clear course for school improvement. The action plan directly addresses the areas for further improvement raised at the full inspection. You have ensured that all teachers have an accurate understanding of the learning needs of their pupils. This is helping them to plan learning activities that challenge pupils with greater precision. Work books and class activities show that pupils are starting to complete different work according to their abilities. More able pupils are beginning to work on more demanding tasks that make them think hard. This is supporting them to make better progress. Pupils were able to tell me what they were learning about and why.

Leaders in the school are checking the progress and learning of pupils more frequently. This is helping the school sharpen the precision of its interventions for pupils, when they are not making enough progress. Leaders and teachers are adapting their approaches to focus on learning. They choose topics carefully to engage and help boys' progress, including in the early years foundation stage. Both boys and girls told me that they find their learning interesting and that teachers help them work hard. Pupils of all ages are developing helpful strategies to sort out difficulties when they 'get stuck'.

You have set out clear expectations for teachers' marking and feedback to pupils. All teachers are using the agreed method of marking. Pupils are responding more frequently, especially where they have made mistakes in spelling, punctuation or grammar. This is beginning to improve the quality of pupils' written work. Developing marking, so that there is a greater focus on how to reach the next stages in learning will improve progress further.

You have set clear expectations for staff for teaching a range of mathematical approaches to problem solving. The training you have provided is helping them to plan activities to tackle problem solving activities frequently. This is helping pupils build confidence in re-applying their learning. The wider use of practical equipment is helping pupils apply different techniques and test their understanding.

You are involving other senior and middle leaders to a greater extent in checking on the quality of teaching. This is improving their understanding of how to improve teaching and secure better pupil progress. Middle leaders are becoming more adept

in improving teaching through leading training and coaching. This is contributing to a more consistent approach to learning. As a consequence, pupils are clear about what they have to do and how to go about it.

You have put in place straight forward steps to ensure that learning is not disrupted as pupils return from intervention groups to their normal classes. Pupils now continue sensibly with suitable work until they join main class activities.

You have made sure that pupils understand that name calling is unacceptable as part of the school's work to ensure good behaviour and pupil's respect for each other. When this does occur, pupils confirm that staff are effective in dealing with this. Staff are vigilant and the school records these incidents.

While there remains much to do on the journey of improvement to good or better, your decisive actions are turning Mead Primary School in the right direction.

External Support

The local authority is providing good quality support to the school. Through the monthly progress meetings, it models high levels of challenge to the school. This is helping the school to sharpen its practices. Specialised support has been provided to develop the school's approach to teaching spelling, punctuation and grammar.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Havering and as below.

Yours sincerely

Chris Campbell

Her Majesty's Inspector