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Barbara Goodchild
Headteacher
Cherrywood Community Primary School
Mayfield Road
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Hampshire
GU14 8LH

Dear Mrs Goodchild

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Cherrywood Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 28 April 2015 with Caroline Dulon, Her Majesty's Inspector, 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 November 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's plans refer to improvements in pupils' achievement as the key measure of success
- leaders develop urgently, sound methods to assess whether pupils are on track for the age-related expectations of the revised National Curriculum, and refer to this information when checking teaching and reporting to governors
- governors improve the way they use information about pupils' achievement to hold leaders to account
- governors develop a suitable action plan to steer their response to the recent review, developing the skills and involvement of the full governing body.

Evidence

During the inspection I met with you and the deputy headteacher. I visited the classrooms talking with some pupils about their learning and looking at work in their books. I met with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a staff governor, and with a representative of the local authority. I examined a range of documents, including teachers' plans for pupils' learning, the school's improvement plans, leaders' checks on teaching, governors' minutes, the recent governance review, a local authority report, and information about pupils' progress and staff training.

Context

The headteacher will retire at the end of the school year. The deputy head has been appointed as the new headteacher from September and governors are currently recruiting a new deputy. A teacher has recently returned from maternity leave.

Main findings

Immediately after the section 5 inspection, you and the deputy headteacher devised an outline school improvement plan, referring specifically to each of the areas identified in the report. After recent enhancement, the plan now identifies suitable responsibilities, actions and timescales, with a well-structured monitoring schedule setting out how leaders and governors will check the school's improvement. However, the measures of success included do not refer closely enough to improvements in pupils' achievement.

You have raised teachers' expectations for the amount of progress pupils should make over the course of a school year, ensuring increased challenge in the targets set for pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are responding well to this approach. Throughout the school, I saw pupils working hard and enjoying their learning, led by adults focused on promoting good progress.

It is positive to see leaders are focusing more closely on checking pupils' progress, for example you now meet regularly with teachers to discuss the achievement of their class. Arising from these meetings, teachers plan specific activities to promote the progress of pupils who have been discussed. This includes disabled pupils and those with special educational needs (SEN), pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding to support those entitled to free schools meals, or looked after), and the most able.

You have developed a promising summary format for reports to governors about pupils' achievement, aiming to provide clear information about the groups discussed with teachers. Unhelpfully though, the measures teachers use to gauge pupils' attainment in Years 1, 3, 4 and 5, do not relate closely enough to the raised expectations of the revised National Curriculum, which now apply to these year

groups. This limits the value of the discussions you have with teachers and the information reported to governors. It is good to know that as a result of the monitoring inspection, you now plan to update the way teachers assess these pupils, as soon as possible.

In Reception class, adults are making increasingly good use of valid information about children's progress, setting clear next steps for individual and groups. As a result, an increased proportion of pupils in Reception class is on track compared with last year, to achieve a good level of development. Having identified that children's writing skills are often their weakest when they join the school, Reception staff are currently making valuable links with the children's centre and other providers to encourage the development of fine motor skills at an earlier stage.

You have begun to check teaching more frequently, providing detailed feedback to teachers about strengths and weaknesses observed. However, you do not consider well enough, whether teaching promotes good achievement with pupils learning at the levels expected for their age. Where necessary, you now provide structured support to ensure teaching improves, but success is not measured adequately by checking that pupils' progress increases.

Sensibly, you are welcoming ideas from local good schools. The deputy headteacher and inclusion manager have undertaken useful visits to see how effective feedback to pupils about their work can accelerate progress. The mathematics leader has made informative visits to a local secondary school, observing teaching in Key Stage 3. During our tour of the school, it was good to see more able pupils being suitably challenged in mathematics lessons.

Because of your clear guidance, teachers' feedback, such as through marking, is increasingly helpful. Nevertheless, this is not universal and pupils are still not always clear enough about how to improve their work.

Governors recognise the importance of ensuring the good achievement of all groups of pupils and are committed to the school's improvement. In a welcome move, the educational standards committee now requires regular reports from leaders about pupils' achievement. However, records of meetings since the inspection do not reflect sufficiently rigorous questioning of leaders' reports, or the involvement of all governors in checking improvement in the school. Where some governors have undertaken checks, these do not relate adequately to the agreed monitoring programme. Additionally, governors accept reports from leaders which contain a great deal of data, but insufficient analysis.

External support

The local authority adviser has worked successfully with the deputy headteacher to develop the school's improvement plan, and helpfully arranged for leaders' visits to local good schools. The local authority organised the recent review of governance

which usefully identifies relevant areas for improvement, but is over-optimistic about how well-informed governors are, especially concerning pupils' achievement. Advisers have not promoted sufficiently urgent development of assessment systems relating to the revised National Curriculum. The local authority continues to provide valued support to governors in recruiting senior leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Siân Thornton
Her Majesty's Inspector