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19 September 2016

Paul Higginbottom
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Dear Mr Higginbottom

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Mattersey Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 12 September 2016, 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 2015. 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 in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- build upon successful school partnership arrangements to secure future school improvement.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the senior teacher and pupils. The inspector met with three governors, including the chair of the board and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated and the inspector visited each classroom and had a tour of the school grounds.

Context

Since the previous inspection one teacher has increased her working hours so that she is now full-time. Prior to this new arrangement, extra teaching hours were covered by supply staff.

Main findings

In partnership with the staff team and governors, you have taken appropriate action to address the areas for improvement identified during the last inspection. The pace of improvement continues to increase. However, the size of the school is a barrier to increasing the pace further. You are rightly drawing upon the expertise contained within your other school.

The leadership of English and mathematics has improved since the last inspection. The senior teacher now oversees these key subjects and closely tracks the progress of all pupils. The leadership of other subjects is supported through partnerships with Everton Primary School. Subject leaders now identify pupils who need further support and act upon this information to put appropriate provision in place. As a result of staff training and increased awareness of staff, the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is much improved. There is evidence of improving outcomes for pupils in their phonics development.

You and the governing body are clear that the school cannot sustain its improvements by working alone. Governors are working hard to find suitable partners with which they can share expertise and resources. The governing body has taken the outcome of the last inspection seriously and is well positioned to make key decisions about the future of the school. Governors recognise the importance of this small school within the community.

The quality and consistency of teaching is improving because teachers and teaching assistants have higher expectations and aspirations for all pupils. Teachers are better at using information about what pupils already know and can do to plan activities. There is an increased rigour in the management of teachers' performance, which includes a clear focus on pupils' achievements. You have set clear expectations about what should happen in lessons.

During the inspection we looked a range of pupils' work from over the last 12 months. Your increased expectations of how work should be marked and how pupils should present their work have made a positive difference. As a result, pupils are starting to make better progress in English and mathematics. Pupils reported to me that they like how their books are marked and they appreciate the opportunity to make changes if they get pieces of work wrong.

Pupils told me that the behaviour of their friends has improved. You have introduced a new behaviour system which means that pupils either go along

'rainbow road' or along the 'behaviour ladder'. Pupils have responded well to this system and they now understand what is expected of them. I observed pupils playing nicely at lunchtime and they were delightful to speak with during the course of the inspection.

There has been a significant investment in the early years environment. The classroom now has improved lighting and decoration. The classroom is organised to allow children to engage in meaningful play activities. You have good plans in place for improving the outside area to a similar standard and you intend to act upon these plans imminently.

External support

The local authority has supported the school in devising and implementing the partnership agreement between Everton Primary School and Mattersey Primary School. Local authority officers monitor the implementation of the plan and the quality of education offered to the pupils.

The local authority is supporting the governing board to make swift decisions about future partnership arrangements.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Nottinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Phil Harrison
Her Majesty's Inspector