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Mrs Suzanne Jones
Headteacher
Woodcote Primary School
Willowbrook Close
Ashby-de-la-Zouch
LE65 1JX

Dear Mrs Jones

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Woodcote Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27 June 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 April 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 visit, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher designate who is also the subject leader for English. I met with the Chair of the Governing Body and I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. We visited all classes to look at the learning that was taking place. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's information about pupils' progress, a sample of pupils' work and the school's improvement plan.

Context

Since the last inspection in April 2014, one teacher has left. A new teacher will start in September 2014.

Main findings

There is a very strong commitment from you, the staff and governors to improve teaching, pupils' achievement and the quality of leadership. You have a high expectation that this should be a good school. To this end, the strengths identified at the last inspection are being built on firmly. For example, the tracking of pupils' progress is now focusing sharply on reasons for current underperformance. You are using interventions intelligently to help particular groups of pupils to achieve better. Staff have discussed how the teaching of mathematics can improve so that pupils can be confident in using their calculation skills to solve problems. Teachers are using the advice and guidance offered by an external consultant for mathematics. Senior leaders are clear about how effective teaching is now and what still needs to improve. Teachers have increased opportunities for pupils to write more extensively, for example in science and topic work, resulting in a greater proportion of pupils showing an improvement in their writing work. You have raised expectations about the quality of teachers' marking and pupils' responses. There is consistency in this aspect of the school's work; pupils I spoke with in lessons enjoy responding to the 'challenges' that are set for them.

A very recent external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding has enabled leaders and governors to set out an action plan. There is a clear role specified for governors in evaluating how well pupils for whom the funds are used are now progressing in English and mathematics. You are making sure that leadership responsibilities are shared more widely and that suitable training is provided to help leaders demonstrate their effectiveness. Governors continue to play an active part in supporting and challenging the school. There are suitable suggestions in the draft school improvement plan showing how governors are going to check the impact of actions. You keep very detailed records of the rate of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics across all classes. The school improvement plan does not include enough measurable success criteria for achievement, for example, in identifying the proportion of pupils expected to make specific amounts of progress.

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 facilitated an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium which has helpfully identified how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved. The local authority's brokering of external support for improving the teaching of mathematics is sharpening up teachers' and pupils' skills. The headteacher reports that coaching from a National Leader of Education, who is headteacher of a local school, is valuable.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children and Family Services for Leicestershire.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector