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Mrs C Dyer
Headteacher
Ashford CofE Primary School
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Dear Mrs Dyer

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Ashford CofE Primary School, Surrey

Following my visit to your school on 2 May 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with yourself, the assistant headteacher, a groups of senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, an officer from the London Diocesan Board and an officer from the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documents were scrutinised including action plans and samples of pupils' work across the school.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection a deputy headteacher has been appointed and is due to take up the post in May 2013. An assistant headteacher was also appointed and took up his post at start of the summer term. One teacher has left the school. At present the class is being taught by two supply teachers. One teaching assistant has joined the school to support pupils with behavioural difficulties. The learning mentor has also left the school. There are now 14 members of the governing body which includes three new parent governors.

Main findings

Senior leaders and governors are ambitious and determined to bring about rapid improvement. They accepted the outcome of the inspection and took swift action to amend their plans. Areas identified for improvement during the inspection were added to the school improvement plan. At present, although the priorities cover the main elements the school needs to improve; it does not include clear milestones relating to the achievement of pupils throughout the year. There is too much overlap in the monitoring and leadership responsibilities for many of the actions and it is unclear what evidence governors should expect to receive in order to effectively monitor the plan. In addition, the plan does not set out the resources implications or identify who is responsible for the evaluation of the plan. These shortcomings make it difficult for governors to ask the right questions or know what information they are expected to be given to enable them to challenge and support the school to rapidly improve.

Senior leaders have already been successful in increasing the proportion of good teaching. The monitoring skills of the some less experienced members of the senior leadership team have improved because of the support they have received from external partners.

Work has begun to develop the use of pupils' targets and improve the feedback teachers provide to pupils in their written work. The scrutiny of pupils' work during the monitoring visit, revealed that there is still more to be done to increase the consistency in the procedures teachers use to check when pupils achieve their targets. Greater consistency is also necessary in the way pupils are guided to improve their work.

An external review of the governing body has been completed. The Chair of the Governing Body has been pro-active in restructuring the way the governing body carries out its work by significantly reducing the number of committees and ensuring that governors are provided with clear roles and responsibilities, with effective induction and training in place to increase individual accountability and effectiveness. The governing body has devised suitable actions for their own improvement which are included in the school improvement plan.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to improve the school development plan by:

- making clear in the milestones what is expected to be evident in pupils' achievement at key points during the year
- separating the responsibilities for leading and monitoring each action

- specifying how the actions will be checked by governors and the evidence they will expect to see
- including the resources required to achieve the actions
- stating how the plan will be evaluated and who is responsible for completing the evaluation.

In addition:

- increase the consistency in the use and monitoring of pupils' targets and the feedback they receive
- send the modified school improvement plan to the HMI by the end of June
- provide the HMI with the information on the achievement of groups of pupils following end of year assessments.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has provided a range of support through the leadership partner and teaching and learning consultants to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The diocesan senior primary advisor has provided valuable support for the headteacher to develop systems for tracking pupils' progress. Both the local authority and the diocese have supported the headteacher to revise the school improvement plan and advise the school during the new leadership appointments of the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. A range of external partners have given effective support to the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team to develop their leadership skills. There are good links with two primary schools in the diocese, enabling teachers to visit these schools to observe good and outstanding teaching. A national leader of education and members of staff from this teaching school have also supported improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Surrey and the Director of the London Diocesan Board of Education.

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector