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Jennifer Wallbank
Headteacher
Stoneydelph Primary School
Crowden Road
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Dear Mrs Wallbank

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Stoneydelph Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 May 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 January 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

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:

- all teachers in Years 1 and 2 better meet the needs of lower ability pupils, and pupils that are disabled and those who have special educational needs
- the subject leader for mathematics provides teachers with the precise guidance they need to help pupils make better progress in this subject
- pupils present their work neatly in all subjects.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, and other leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last

inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed including information about pupils' achievement, written feedback to teachers following lesson observations, and information about the quality of teaching. You and the deputy headteacher joined me on brief visits to some classes. We talked to pupils about their learning and reviewed some pupils' writing, mathematics, and topic work.

Context

Prior to the s5 inspection in January 2015, two new teachers joined the school and three teachers were absent due to family leave. At the time of this monitoring inspection, these three teachers were still on family leave.

Main findings

You and the deputy headteacher have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You use information about pupils' achievement well to ensure that pupils receive the additional support they need and to organise appropriate training for staff. This is contributing to improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.

During our brief visits to lessons, pupils were keen to talk about their activities and what they were learning. Pupils in Year 5 for instance were thoroughly enjoying discussing different parachute designs and which one would ensure a raw egg landed safely. Teachers are getting better at making sure that the activities for the most able pupils are sufficiently challenging. Work in pupils' books shows that teachers plan activities that encourage the most able pupils to build on what they already know and can do.

Our review of pupils' work showed that the activities for lower ability pupils, and pupils that are disabled and those who have special educational needs are sometimes too difficult. This results in slower rates of progress for this group of pupils, especially in Years 1 and 2. The leader with responsibility for overseeing the achievement of these pupils is aware of this. She is planning on providing staff with further training and guidance so that they can better meet their learning needs.

Your information about pupils' achievement and work in pupils' books shows that pupils are making generally stronger progress in reading and writing than in mathematics. The leaders for reading and writing regularly check the progress of different groups of pupils across the school and identify the precise actions that need to be taken to help pupils make better progress. The feedback they give to teachers following lesson observations and reviews of pupils' work is specific. They ensure that once actions are agreed with individual teachers they are followed up promptly. In contrast, the feedback from the leader with responsibility for mathematics is too general. This feedback does not tell teachers precisely what they need to do to help different groups of pupils make better progress in mathematics. In all classes,

teachers are increasingly giving pupils the opportunity to practise their reading, writing and mathematics skills across different subjects.

The teaching of religious education has strengthened. Consequently, pupils have a better understanding of different faiths and cultures. To help pupils develop a greater understanding of life beyond the United Kingdom, you are in the process developing a link with a school in South Africa.

Teachers' marking has improved, especially in Years 3 to 6. Teachers in these year groups tell pupils what they need to do to improve. This helps pupils to correct errors in their work. Marking has improved in Years 1 and 2 but is variable. In these year groups pupils are not always given the exact guidance they need and errors are not always identified. This results in pupils repeating their mistakes. Presentation of pupils' work across the school is variable. Pupils generally form their letters correctly and write neatly in their writing and topic books. Presentation in mathematics is inconsistent, with pupils not always forming their numbers clearly and sometimes producing untidy work.

Following an external review of governance, members of the governing body have identified the training they require to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. You and other senior leaders are ensuring that governors are kept up to date with the performance of different groups of pupils in the school and the quality of teaching. This is helping governors to ask searching questions about pupils' progress in different subjects and about teaching. Governors are using a suitable range of strategies to check the difference senior leaders are making to pupils' achievement.

The revised school improvement plan accurately identifies the actions that need to be taken to further raise pupils' achievement and to strengthen teaching and leadership, including governance. The school improvement plan makes clear how governors will check that the actions senior leaders take are making enough of a difference to pupils' progress. The plan does not always state when governors will make these checks.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

You are receiving a good level of support and challenge from the school's local authority adviser. He has correctly identified the precise improvements required in teaching, pupils' achievement and with the leadership of mathematics. He has helped you to prioritise the actions you need to take. You have made arrangements to work with a local successful school and an external consultant. Training and support from staff at the local school and the consultant is having a beneficial impact on teaching and pupils' achievement.

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

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi

Her Majesty's Inspector