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Dear Jane Wilford

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wootton Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 24 January 2018, 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 October 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in October 2016, 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 in order for the school to become good.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement action plans were evaluated. I visited classrooms with the headteacher and met with the subject leaders for English and mathematics. I talked with a group of Year 6 pupils and considered a range of the school's documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, the outcomes of monitoring activities and the impact of performance management.

Context

A number of changes have occurred since the last inspection. A new headteacher has been appointed following the departure of the previous post holder. A newly qualified teacher has been appointed for the reception class and a temporary class teacher found for the Year 6 class. A staffing restructure has resulted in the loss of the deputy headteacher post and a reduction in the number of teaching assistants.

Main findings

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving. Leaders are taking appropriate action to tackle poor teaching. Teachers are given effective support to help them develop. Teachers are now more involved in the tracking and recording of information about what pupils know and can do. This is helping them to plan lessons and activities that more closely match the needs of their pupils.

The assessment of what pupils know and can do is getting better. However, this information is not yet reliable across the school. Where the process has been streamlined and moderated, such as in reception class, there is an accurate picture of pupils' performance.

Pupils behave well and can talk about how teachers help them to improve. Pupils in Year 6 value the variety of additional activities to help them to improve, for example through the homework and maths clubs.

The teaching of mathematics is becoming increasingly consistent. A clearer approach to how the subject will be taught and a new way for teachers to plan learning are helping teachers to ensure that pupils make better progress. Leaders closely monitor this work through, for example weekly meetings with pupils across the school. This activity, known as the 'Golden Ticket', provides valuable information about pupils' experiences of teaching in the school. It also gives regular opportunities for parents and carers to feed back on their child's experience.

Pupils now have regular opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to challenging problems. A good example of this was seen in Year 3, where pupils were encouraged to identify a range of ways they could tackle the same problem. In some cases, these problem-solving activities provide a chance to practise a taught skill and do not provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their mathematics knowledge.

Leadership and management are improving. Improvement plans are concise and focused on the key areas identified that required improvement at the last inspection. However, leaders' evaluation of the current performance of the school, although comprehensive, is limited by the inconsistent assessment information.

Subject leaders' roles have been strengthened to ensure that they monitor the impact of teaching on progress more closely. They report greater ownership of their work and a greater role in monitoring the quality of their subject. Leaders are rightly focusing on interventions to correct and tackle gaps in pupils' learning. These are helping them to support the most able pupils. However, leaders are not yet sufficiently focused on improving teaching so that these gaps don't reappear for younger pupils.

Governance is strong. Governors seek advice and support when necessary and act quickly when they find something that needs to improve. A good example of this is that they instigated their own review of the use of funding for disadvantaged pupils, and have already acted on its findings. Governors successfully use performance management to hold leaders to account. They have introduced regular direct reports from subject leaders to ensure that they closely track progress in English and mathematics.

External support

The school is making good use of the very effective support provided by the local authority. Advisors have supported the governing body with appointments and staffing issues. They have given ongoing support for leaders across the school, including targeted support to develop the teaching and leadership of mathematics. Governors have sensibly sought further support from the local authority when they have felt this was required.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Minns
Her Majesty's Inspector