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10 July 2015

Mrs Wendy Cathie
Headteacher
Leigh St Peter's CofE Primary School
Leigh Street
Leigh
Lancashire
WN7 4TP

Dear Mrs Cathie

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Leigh St Peter's CofE Primary School, Wigan

Following my visit to your school on 9 July 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 March 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. The school should take further action to:

- review departmental action plans so that you and governors are able to fully hold middle leaders to account for the impact of their actions
- ensure that the progress of all groups of pupils is checked rigorously, including the most able
- further review the quality of feedback and marking, alongside the school policy, to ensure that the marking of pupils' work is purposeful
- ensure that the pupil premium review is carried out at the earliest opportunity.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, three members of the governing body, a small group of pupils and a

telephone meeting was held with a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan as well as a range of other documents were scrutinised. I also visited each classroom with you to speak to pupils, look at their books and observe their learning.

Context

Three teachers who were absent during the recent inspection have now returned to school.

Main findings

The findings of the recent inspection held no surprises for you or other senior leaders. Your self-evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is generally accurate and as a consequence you have been able to plan appropriate actions to move the school forward.

You have acted swiftly to address the issue of low level disruption by some pupils in lessons. Staff have raised their expectations of pupils across the school and a renewed focus on rewarding good behaviour is beginning to pay dividends. During our learning walk all classrooms were calm and pupils' attitudes towards their learning were positive; we observed no instances of low level disruptive behaviour. Pupils speak highly of the new ethos throughout the school. They say that the system for managing behaviour at lunchtime and break time is now applied consistently and that time off the playground helps them to reflect on their behaviour. As a result, they say that the playground is now a much calmer environment.

Your introduction of more frequent leadership meetings has brought a sense of shared purpose to your middle leaders. They continue to benefit from the coaching that they receive from an external consultant. This has enabled them to understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to school improvement. They now undertake a range of monitoring activities, with a clear focus, to check on the quality of teaching. Where teaching is not strong, support such as observing good teaching in another school is provided. Middle leaders report that teachers are increasingly receptive to this support. Consequently, the early signs of improvements in pupils' achievement are beginning to be seen.

All middle leaders have written improvement plans for their department. However, these are variable in quality. In the strongest plans for instance, actions are clear and concise with explicit measurable success criteria. Where this is not the case planned outcomes are too vague, particularly in relation to groups of pupils such as those known to be disadvantaged. As a consequence, you and governors are not able to hold leaders fully to account for the impact of their actions.

A reviewed marking and feedback policy is in place across the school. In many classes however, marking is still ineffective at supporting pupils' learning. Teachers

spend a significant amount of time marking and highlighting pupils' work, but the purpose of their considerable efforts is not clear. In a Key Stage 2 pupil's writing book for example, almost every word and punctuation mark had been highlighted in a different colour by the teacher. This neither supported the pupil to move forward in their learning nor celebrated their work.

There is evidence that some teachers have raised expectations for the most able pupils in the school. The introduction of intervention classes, specifically for this group of pupils in Key Stage 1, has been effective in increasing the percentage of pupils currently working at the higher level three in Year 2. However, the achievement of this group of pupils is not explicitly checked more widely across the school. As a result, you and other senior leaders are not able to hold all teachers fully to account for the progress of these pupils.

The Early Years leader has taken positive action to ensure that the quality of teaching and the progress that children make continue to improve. She has used an audit of staff skills to tailor training to their needs. Lessons and activities that encourage imagination and creativity such as 'the lifecycle of a butterfly', which we observed during our learning walk, enthuse children to write about and develop their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. As a consequence, the proportion of pupils who have reached a good level of development this year is a significant improvement from 2014.

Governors continue to support the school and are keen to play a more challenging role to ensure that the school improves at a rapid pace. There is evidence that they are beginning to ask you more challenging questions to hold you to account for the impact of your actions but there is still room for improvement. The addition of two new governors, both with a strong educational background, will further strengthen capacity from September.

You have invested in a new tracking system to help you check on the progress of pupils who receive pupil premium funding. You have a large amount of information about this group of pupils but have not fully evaluated how rapidly the achievement gap is closing between other pupils in all year groups across the school. An external pupil premium review has been organised but has not yet been carried out.

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

The local authority has stepped up its involvement with the school since the inspection. The local authority representative has supported you to write the post Ofsted action plan and continues to visit the school at regular intervals to provide support and challenge. An external review of governance is fully underway and you have received an interim report.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Wigan and as below.

Yours sincerely

Martin Bell

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
hns.efa@education.gsi.gov.uk
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation