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Mrs Sarah Slatter
Headteacher
Tysoe CofE Primary School
Saddledon Street
Tysoe
CV35 0SH

Dear Mrs Slatter

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Tysoe CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 9 December 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 September 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governor are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- build an accurate picture of the quality of teaching, taking into account the progress pupils make as demonstrated by the work in their books as well as information about achievement over time
- give teachers precise guidance on how to improve and set short timescales for these changes to be made, checking rigorously that improvements are happening
- provide high-quality training for teachers to help them challenge all pupils at the right level and to ensure no learning time is wasted
- link with a good or better school to give teachers opportunities to learn from observing good or outstanding practice.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, your teachers, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Coventry to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The inspector spoke to some parents as they brought their children to school. The school action plan was evaluated. Other documents were examined: the school's checks on the quality of teaching, information about how teachers are set targets and how this links to their salaries and information about pupils' current achievement. Short visits were made to lessons to talk to pupils about their learning and to look at the work in their books.

Context

There have been no significant changes to staff since the previous inspection. Warwickshire local authority has brokered a new learning improvement officer to provide support and challenge to the school.

Main findings

Overall, staff and governors agree that the school needs to improve. Nevertheless, some have not fully accepted the findings of the inspection in September. As a result there has not been sufficient urgency around improving the quality of teaching.

You have reviewed the systems for setting teachers' performance targets. These now link to speeding up the progress pupils make. However, the targets do not hold teachers sufficiently to account against national expectations. Consequently, in some classes, including some where teachers are paid higher salaries, pupils are still not making enough progress. Some books seen during the inspection indicated pupils have made little or no progress in writing since September. Some pupils spoken to did not understand what they had to do or how they could improve their work because teachers' explanations are still not clear enough to help pupils know what is expected of them.

You have discussed with teachers what you expect to see in good or better lessons. Some have made visits to other schools or have observed their colleagues to build a shared understanding of the features of good teaching and learning. You have not translated this into a clear set of expectations for what teachers must do in all lessons so there is not a consistent approach to ensuring pupils make good progress.

Your action plan identifies how you intend to address all the issues identified at the previous inspection and shows clearly how you will check that improvements are happening. However, the pace of actions and the expected rate of improvement are based on an over-generous view of teaching quality. As a result, the school has already missed its first key milestone for improving the quality of teaching. The plan is not fully shared with staff and there is no clear overview of what is happening

each week, so governors cannot check whether deadlines have been met and teachers do not know whether they are on track to make expected improvements.

Governors continue to ask challenging questions aimed at ensuring the quality of leadership improves. They understand that they have been too reliant in the past on information you provide when forming a view of the school's effectiveness. They know they need to dig deeper to check the accuracy of information received. Communication between governors, leaders and staff is ineffective, so a climate of misunderstanding and mistrust pervades.

Your recent survey shows most parents are now happy with the information they receive about the progress their children make. You have updated the complaints policy and processes for responding to parents' concerns when they are raised. This information has not been shared with parents or published on the school's website. Some parents spoken to still feel their concerns are not addressed well enough.

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

During the inspection, HMI was unable to meet with the full governing body. Apart from the staff governor, no members of the governing body attended the feedback at the end of the inspection. HMI will return to the school as soon as possible to meet with the full governing body.

External support

The school has drawn upon a range of external support to develop plans for improvement and begin to establish opportunities for teachers to observe good and outstanding practice. The local authority has supported you in drawing up the action plan and in checking the quality of teaching since the last inspection. These checks have not focused sufficiently on the progress pupils make as shown in their books. Consequently the picture you have of the quality of teaching is too generous. The local authority has met with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body to discuss the implications of the inspection in September and to agree a package of training and support. The local authority plans to monitor the impact of the rapid action plan each half term. The Diocese of Coventry has provided pastoral support to maintain the morale and well-being of staff and is monitoring the school's progress in order to determine an appropriate next level of further support.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services Warwickshire local authority.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Hayes
Her Majesty's Inspector