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8 July 2015

Peter Kyles
Principal
St Mary's Primary School, Dilwyn
Dilwyn
HR4 8HR

Dear Mr Kyles

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Mary's Primary School, Dilwyn

Following my visit to your school on 7 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 April 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 ensure that:

- the key aspects of recent staff training on safeguarding are embedded in the curriculum so that pupils' understanding of how to keep safe is deepened
- the school's action plan includes more measurable criteria against which progress can be checked, and states clearly what evidence will be considered when evaluating improvements in the quality of teaching
- teachers receive further training to help them to plan challenging learning activities for pupils of a range of abilities and on how to implement the school's preferred approach to the marking and assessment of pupils' work
- the outcomes of the planned external review of safeguarding arrangements, including those related to governance, are acted upon.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, as the Principal, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chair of the Trustees to discuss the actions that have been taken since the last inspection. The school's action plan was evaluated and documents related to staff training and the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils were reviewed. We spent a short amount of time in each classroom.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the previous inspection. A Clerk to the Governing Body has been appointed.

Main findings

Leaders, including governors, have taken quick action in a short space of time to tackle the issues raised in the section 5 report related to statutory safeguarding arrangements. A range of school leaders, including the Chair of the Governing Body, has now completed enhanced safeguarding training. The high priority now given to this training, and subsequently ensuring that all staff understand the key messages, shows that leaders have taken their responsibilities seriously. School policies have been updated to reflect the latest government guidance and all staff, governors and trustees have been made aware of how the content of this may affect their work. Teachers I spoke to had a good understanding of how to spot in pupils signs of potential concerns and what to do as a result. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, such as when using the internet and regarding road safety. Leaders are in the process of making sure that other issues relating to pupils' safety and welfare are now being included in an age-appropriate way within the curriculum. An audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements is planned.

Leaders have also begun to address the other areas of improvement identified. For example, the outdoor space for children in the early years has been developed and a new member of staff has joined with early years experience. Reading and mathematics 'challenges' have been introduced as ways in which teachers are increasing the levels of challenge for pupils in lessons. Further training for teachers on this aspect, and on developing a revised approach to marking and assessment, is taking place in early September 2015.

The school's action plan is appropriate and is particularly thorough in relation to safeguarding. There is less clarity on how progress towards improving teaching will be measured and evaluated.

Key Stage 2 test results were issued on the day of the inspection. Leaders are in the process of analysing these results to measure the progress that pupils have made.

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

Leaders have been proactive in seeking advice and support to improve the school's safeguarding arrangements. The headteacher of a local school is now acting as a 'critical friend' to leaders in relation to safeguarding. An adviser from the Department for Education will be providing training and support to teachers and leaders on further strengthening the quality of teaching.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Herefordshire and the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

James McNeillie
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- For free schools, UTCs and studio schools [open.FREESCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk]
- Department for Education