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5 March 2014

Mrs Juliet Silverton
Headteacher
Pennyhill Primary School
Hollyhedge Road
West Bromwich
B71 3BU

Dear Mrs Silverton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Pennyhill Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 March 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 December 2013. 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 displays around the school celebrate pupils' writing and help pupils to develop their vocabulary more effectively
- improve the Key Stage 1 library so that it encourages pupils to use it and read more.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, your deputy head and assistant headteachers, a representative of the local authority, and the Chair of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's plans for improvement and reviewed some of the school's achievement data. I

visited classrooms and observed parts of three lessons, talked to a number of pupils and looked at samples of books.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the recent inspection.

Main findings

You and your staff are working determinedly to tackle the areas for development identified in the report. Your action plans accurately reflect the school's development areas. Your wider leadership team and middle managers understand what needs to be and are leading the developments. All plans have appropriate actions linked to regular monitoring points. Your monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress is tighter and the focus is on improving pupils' progress.

Pupils' progress information indicates that pupils are beginning to make better progress in mathematics and reading. Teachers have reviewed their planning and have identified more opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge and understanding and apply it to real-life problems. The grouping of pupils in attainment for mathematics is helping teachers target work more closely to address weaknesses in pupils' understanding. Pupils are enjoying the recently introduced, fortnightly homework of mathematics problems. Teachers' marking is more consistent in identifying how pupils can improve their work. Displays around the school celebrate pupils' work, especially in art, but opportunities are missed to emphasise pupils' writing.

Pupils stated they are reading more. They like the recently introduced 'Bug club', which is encouraging them to read more often and from a wider selection of different genres. Pupils are participating in a greater number of reading activities including attending the local library, reading challenges, and using the school library. All pupils have more opportunities for reading to an adult. The Key Stage 2 library is well organised and inviting. The Key Stage 1 library does not match this.

You have refocused all staff training to make use of the best teachers in the school. Staff training links closely to both the school's development plans and the individual needs of teachers. Teachers planning and teaching alongside each other is improving teachers' strategies for developing writing, assessment and questioning.

Governors understand what the school has to do improve further. They have focussed on ensuring they have good quality independent information on how well the school is improving. Governors are using this information to challenge you and support the school's improvement.

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

External support

The school makes effective use of external support. This includes an appropriate mix of support services from the local authority as well as using the expertise for a nearby outstanding school and a local network of schools. The local authority works intensively with individual teachers and supports whole school training effectively.

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

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector