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Mrs Gosnold
Headteacher
William Read Primary School
Long Road
Canvey Island
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Dear Mrs Gosnold

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of William Read Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 19 June 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please would you also pass on my thanks to the local authority representatives and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body for their time in our discussions.

Since the last inspection, staffing within the school has been restructured. This has resulted in three teachers leaving and the appointment of two new deputy headteachers, one of whom is starting before the end of term and the other from the beginning of the next academic year. At the time of the monitoring visit, two staff were absent, one for sickness and one on maternity leave. From September, three more members of staff will be on maternity leave and two others are going to part-time work. Three newly-qualified teachers have been appointed. The number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs continues to rise to above average proportions. Mobility in and out of the school other than at expected times remains high.

As a result of the inspection on 7 December 2011, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Pupils' achievement, particularly in writing at the upper end of the school, is improving. Standards amongst the higher levels reached by Year 6 have risen by 31 per cent, and the average level achieved has increased by 16 per cent. Pockets of satisfactory and good progress across the rest of the school in writing, and handwriting, are ensuring that standards and achievement in English are moving in

the right direction. The progress made in improving spelling is not as advanced as the improvement in writing. A number of newly instigated interventions across the school are starting to have a positive impact on raising attainment and improving pupils' individual writing skills. The introduction of specific individual support in spelling and reading, administered by newly trained teaching assistants, is having a positive impact on raising standards. The introduction of a more structured phonic/information and communication technology programme targeted for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, along with the introduction of the 'Big Write', is also raising levels of achievement in writing. Booster classes aimed specifically at those older pupils identified as being capable of achieving more, along with four booster sessions open to all Year 6 pupils over the Easter holidays, have also helped to raise pupils' attainment. The Early Years Foundation Stage has introduced strategies to support the development of early writing skills. Staff there hold weekly writing activities which parents and carers are invited to participate in, around half of the parents and carers of children in the Reception classes attend. This has had a positive impact on children's writing in the early years: consequently, they are achieving just above national averages.

The quality of teaching is improving, despite the considerable number of changes within staffing. Teachers' expectations have been raised through both training and the introduction of clearly laid-out expectations for all staff in line with the previous inspection key areas for improvement. More rigorous monitoring of lessons by the headteacher and senior leadership team and closer scrutiny of both planning and delivery of lessons across classes are having a positive effect on improvement. While the number of good lessons seen is increasing, there are still a significant number of satisfactory lessons. Teachers' use of questioning to elicit understanding of what is expected is more structured and clearly supports pupils' learning. Pupils are much clearer about what the aims of the lessons are. The introduction of a new marking policy, along with a more rigorous structure to marking, also ensures that pupils are much clearer about what is expected of them and how they can improve their work. In conversation with pupils, they revealed that they are clear about what their levels are and how they can try to get even better.

The local authority, together with an external consultant, as part of the implementation of the statement of action and action plan, provide effective support for the school. Support from lead teachers in numeracy and literacy, who work alongside the school's teachers, is improving outcomes. Inspection evidence shows that this additional, focused support has been effective in improving the quality of teaching. This external support, along with the more rigorous monitoring and continued support of the governing body, has helped the school to raise its own internal capacity to improve, which is satisfactory.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Vale
Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in 7–8 December 2011

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress in English by giving them more opportunities to write for a range of purposes and gain pleasure from writing. In doing so:
 - implement a consistent approach to how spelling is taught
 - deepen pupils' understanding of grammar and punctuation so that they can write accurately
 - ensure that pupils develop skills in joining their handwriting so they can write quickly and legibly.

- By December 2012, improve the quality of teaching throughout the school so that the large majority of it is good by:
 - improving the way staff ask questions so they challenge and deepen pupils' thinking skills, raising expectations of what pupils can do and providing them with challenging activities
 - making clear to pupils what they are to achieve, especially in their written work
 - providing clear feedback in lessons to correct any misconceptions
 - ensuring that the marking policy is implemented consistently, and that pupils have the opportunity to reflect and act upon the comments made by their teachers.

- Monitor rigorously the implementation of initiatives to ensure that they are having a positive impact on outcomes for pupils, as shown in their work and levels of attainment.