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Jessica Balado
Headteacher
St Mary's Community Primary School, Beetley
Elmham Road
Beetley
Dereham
NR20 4BW

Dear Ms Balado

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Mary's Community Primary School, Beetley

Following my visit to your school on 27 February 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated. The headteacher conducted HMI on a short tour of the school.

Context

The senior teacher has been absent from school since January and the Year 5 teacher has moved into Year 6. There have been no other significant changes since the last inspection.

Main findings

The school has devised effective systems to gather information about pupils' achievement, including an electronic data system and regular meetings to discuss

pupils' learning. The headteacher is supporting staff in using data to measure how much progress different groups of pupils are making. Changes to approaches in the teaching of reading are accelerating pupils' progress. The special educational needs coordinator is considering better ways to use teaching assistants' skills to support and promote good learning. The school improvement plan reflects key priorities identified in the recent inspection and is driven by better outcomes for pupils. However, the plan is too vague: expectations for good progress are not set out clearly with measurable figures, leaving 'good progress' open to interpretation.

The governing body is not up to speed in agreeing a clear plan of action to address shortcomings identified at the inspection and those arising from a recent audit. Governors have recently received training in how to interpret data. Regular monitoring of the school's work especially teaching and pupils' achievement, independent of that undertaken by staff, is not happening. As a result, little headway has been made on strengthening governance.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- sharpen targets for pupils' good progress ensuring that they are quantified and measurable
- ensure that the governing body completes and implements its plans to improve governance
- engage governors in regular monitoring of the school's work independent of that undertaken by staff.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has supported the school in developing an electronic system to collect information on pupils' achievement. It has undertaken a full review of the governing body's effectiveness and provided training on how to interpret and use data. Training and professional development for teaching staff, tailored to need, is helping to improve their performance and raise pupils' achievement.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman
Her Majesty's Inspector