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Mrs Jayne Mitchell
Headteacher
Gosbecks Primary School
Owen Ward Close
Shrub End
Colchester
CO2 9DG

Dear Mrs Mitchell

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Gosbecks Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 19 April 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 my previous visit.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, special needs coordinator and Chair of the Governing Body. The school improvement plan, the Governor's action plan and the recent local authority review of special educational needs provision were examined. Information about pupils' progress since the last visit was reviewed. Short visits were made to each classroom and pupils' books were examined to evaluate the teaching and learning of mathematics.

Context

Since the first monitoring visit, a review of governance has been undertaken with the National College of School Leadership. In addition, a review of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has been carried out by local authority advisers.

Main findings

The school's pupil tracking data shows that pupils in Key Stage 2 are currently making good progress. They have made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics over the last five terms. However, the progress of older pupils since Year 2 is not yet good. This is because they have not fully made up for the slow progress they made when they in Year 3.

The special educational needs review shows that the school has good systems in place and that pupils' needs are accurately assessed. A few pupils have made such good progress that they no longer need additional support. Teaching assistants are now receiving feedback following lesson observations.

Following the review of governance, the governing body has established a performance review committee. Governors have undertaken training and are now more effective in holding the senior leaders to account for pupils' attainment and progress.

Since the previous visit, the school improvement plan has been strengthened. It now contains more measurable targets, timescales and milestones and shows more clearly who is responsible for different aspects of the plan. Progress reports to governors are now more frequent and easier to relate to the school's targets.

The teaching of mathematics is improving as a result of training, teachers observing good practice, and guidance on using visual and practical aids to develop pupils' understanding. There is still some evidence that topics are not always taught in a consistent way in different year-groups. This was evident from looking at work on fractions across Years 2 to 6.

Marking is conscientious, with teachers writing comments and suggesting additional tasks to help pupils improve. However, pupils do not always respond to these comments, because not enough time is set aside for them to do so.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the inspection in September 2012.

Following the visit to the school, I recommend that further action is taken to:

- improve the planning for progression in mathematics topics other than calculation
- ensure that pupils are given time to respond to marking.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection. The school has agreed to provide regular updates on pupils' progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen Abbott
Her Majesty's Inspector