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Chris Beddow
Headteacher
Abbey Meadows Primary School
Galfrid Road
Cambridge
CB5 8ND

Dear Mr Beddow

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Abbey Meadows Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 17 May 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and a senior adviser from the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

A Year 1 teacher left in February 2013. A supply teacher was recruited to teach the Year 1 class until the end of the summer term 2013. There have been no other significant changes since the section 5 inspection which judged the school to have serious weaknesses.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The local authority statement of action clearly identifies the support to be provided to improve teaching in Key Stage 1, raise standards in writing, accelerate the progress made by those who are new to speaking English and improve leadership and management. The support provided is suitably tailored to the school's needs, and focuses on the most important weaknesses to be addressed. The timescales for action and the measures used to evaluate the impact of the support provided are explicit. The financial cost of the local authority input is clear. Arrangements to inform parents and others about the planned actions, and how their views will be gathered and taken into account, are clearly specified in the statement of action. For example, a strategic implementation group has been established to monitor the progress made in addressing the areas for improvement identified in February 2013. The outcomes of the half-termly meetings of this group will be reported to parents and others.

The school improvement plan is suitably focused on the key priorities and the impact of actions is clearly specified. The activities undertaken so far to improve teaching and learning, particularly in Key Stage 1, are proving effective in remedying individual teachers' weaknesses. Five teachers, including two assistant headteachers, are leaving in July 2013. The school has made suitable plans to recruit replacements.

In February 2013, inspectors recommended that an external review of governance should be undertaken. This will be carried out on 16 June 2013, by a local authority specialist. The aim is to identify the strengths and weaknesses in governance, and a plan will be produced to improve governors' effectiveness. The local authority has also appointed two governor advisers to provide additional support to the governing body to ensure that they drive improvement effectively. A school improvement governor has been appointed by the school. This governor will identify key questions that governors must ask when they undertake school visits. Governors will provide written answers to any questions set at termly governing body meetings. The Chair of the Governing Body is meeting an assistant headteacher each half term, to evaluate pupils' performance and the impact of the actions taken to raise standards. She is also taking responsibility for overseeing the quality of education provided in Key Stage 1. Another governor is doing the same task in Key Stage 2. Such activities are ensuring that governors are appropriately holding senior leaders to account for school outcomes.

All staff employed by the school have been suitably vetted. The single central register does not contain all of the required information. For example, the date of checks and the person carrying them out are not always specified.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Rzeznik

Additional Inspector