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Mr Mark Eadon
Headteacher
Holly Hill Primary and Nursery School
Off Portland Road
Selston
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NG16 6AW

Dear Mr Eadon

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Holly Hill Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 4 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and findings of the inspection. 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 May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, two additional governors, and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the school was inspected, there have not been any new members of staff or changes to the context of the school.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The school improvement plan provides an appropriate foundation for improvement. The priorities for development are aligned to those identified in the inspection report and the actions to be taken are relevant, clear and specific. However, the plan is not always precise enough in defining what success will look like. This could make it more difficult for the school to measure the progress it is making in the coming months. In addition, the school has identified other areas of concern. The proportions of pupils reaching expected levels in the Year 1 screening check of their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics), and in reading and writing at the end of Year 2, are likely to be significantly below national averages at the end of this year. The school would benefit from including these important aspects in its priorities for development.

The senior leadership team has taken immediate action to secure improvements. For example, the school website has been developed so that it complies with current requirements, although it is not yet fully operational, and parents will be given more information about their children's progress in the end-of-term reports. The school has appropriate plans to ensure that pupils' progress will be tracked regularly and thoroughly, and to enable greater precision in measuring the effectiveness and impact of the support provided for pupils. It is also in the process of appointing new permanent staff to provide more stability in staffing. Plans for the next academic year quite rightly focus on longer-term strategies to improve pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.

The governing body is providing a rapidly increasing level of challenge and support. The governors have acted quickly to ensure that they hold leaders to account and are able to influence school improvement. A link governor is responsible for reporting on each of the priorities in the school improvement plan, and there is a very clear schedule for monitoring and evaluating progress made. In addition, they are developing better ways to communicate with parents.

The local authority provides an appropriate level of support. It has identified a partner school, with a proven track record of school improvement, to work with the school. It is also carrying out regular reviews to ensure that there is no slippage in the actions identified in the school improvement plan. A core group, chaired by a senior member of the local authority and including the headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body, meets each term to monitor progress and evaluate the impact of the actions taken.

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 Nottinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Barkway
Additional Inspector