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Mrs J Edwards
Headteacher
Deykin Avenue Junior and Infant School
Deykin Avenue
Witton
B6 7BU

Dear Mrs Edwards

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Deykin Avenue Junior and Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 16 September 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 June 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking incisive and urgent action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- accelerate the progress of pupils' attainment in Year 5, especially in reading and mathematics
- increase the frequency of pupil progress meetings
- clarify who will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating particular actions for improvement and when these will take place and to whom they will be reported
- set challenging targets in English and mathematics for all pupils up to July 2015.

Evidence

During the visit I met with you and your deputy headteacher to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Meetings were held with four members of the governing body, eight pupils from Years 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, a representative of the

local authority and the School Improvement Partner. You showed me around the school and we visited every class and an intervention group to see the pupils at work. I looked at a number of pupils' books and teachers' lesson plans. I evaluated the school development plan and Ofsted improvement plan. I looked at a range of documentation, including parent surveys, teachers' personal development plans and the school's information about pupils' progress and attainment.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the inspection in June.

Main findings

Senior leaders have acted quickly to improve teaching. Teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils say there is greater challenge in their classwork and homework. One pupil said that they 'learn loads more'. Leaders have increased the number of phonics, handwriting, spelling and guided reading sessions in all year groups. Pupils say that they now read a greater variety of books and as a result their vocabulary and spelling have improved. The work in pupils' books shows that writing is neat, accurate and that the great majority of words are correctly spelt.

The school's marking policy has been revised and as a consequence pupils now have more opportunities to reflect on and mark their own and others' work. Pupils say that this helps them better understand challenging work and that they like having to give reasons why the work is good or how it could be improved. Teachers know what the elements of good and outstanding teaching are because of the well-focused training they have received from senior leaders. Teachers are beginning to put some of these elements into practice. For example, pupils said that they now have extra opportunities to work independently and that this helps them concentrate on their work. Leaders have introduced literacy and language programmes into the lessons. Lesson observations undertaken by leaders, including governors, indicate that this is making a positive difference to pupils' reading and writing in most year groups. However, assessment data provided by the school shows that pupils in Year 5 are not making expected progress, especially in reading and in mathematics.

All leaders and teachers monitor the effect teaching has on pupil progress. Individual targets for what pupils are to achieve are being used by each class teacher. These targets include information about how groups, for example those whom the pupil premium grant provides support, should perform. Meetings between leaders and teachers to discuss the progress of pupils have been introduced. However, these are not frequent enough to enable early intervention for pupils falling behind.

Actions in the school development and Ofsted improvement plans are clear and appropriate. They address the areas requiring improvement identified by the inspection and by the school leaders' self-evaluation. However, the dates by which monitoring activities will take place have not been set and it is unclear who will be

responsible for monitoring and to whom they will report. Ambitious targets for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics are included in the improvement plans. However, these do not extend beyond July 2014.

Governors have acted promptly to establish an 'Ofsted Task Force' committee to specifically focus on the impact of the school's actions to raise attainment and to ensure pupils learn at a faster rate. Governors continue to monitor the impact of new initiatives and say that they can see a definite improvement in the standard of pupils' work.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority provides effective support for the school. The school improvement adviser and the School Improvement Partner have supported leaders in preparing the school self-evaluation and action plans. More support is planned for the future, including helping governors with data analysis. Two local schools are providing useful support in a range of areas, for example improving the quality of teaching in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Humphries
Her Majesty's Inspector