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Mrs Lisa Worrall
Headteacher
The Green Infant School
New Street
South Normanton
DE55 2BS

Dear Mrs Worrall

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Green Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 3 October 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 May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

- improve your school improvement plan by including clear success criteria relating to the progress and attainment of groups of pupils, so that governors can evaluate the impact of the school's actions more frequently.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, a member of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority. We conducted a tour of the school and spoke to pupils about their work. I evaluated your plans for improvement and considered documentation relating to the monitoring of teaching. I reviewed your most recent data on pupils' progress and attainment. I looked at a range of pupils' work and considered the quality of their learning in a range of subjects. I evaluated the quality of marking.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, there have been no significant contextual changes within the school.

Main findings

You have wasted no time in improving teachers' skills in making accurate assessments of pupils' learning. Teachers are using this information to plan activities which more closely meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. You have introduced a new approach to marking. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the 'tickled pink' and 'green growth' comments in their books. This is helping them to see more clearly how well they have done and what they have to next to reach their targets. You have raised staffs' expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly in writing. Consequently, pupils are more motivated because they have more interesting subjects to write about. The launch of the new 'topic folders' has helped to improve the quality of the presentation of pupils' work. You have carried out more regular checks to make sure that these changes are improving the quality of teaching as well as providing staff with clearer guidance on how they can improve further.

Although the governing body has made arrangements for the review of governance before the end of term, it is clear that governors are already providing senior leaders with greater levels of challenge and support. They are checking the work of the school more effectively. Governors have been aligned to aspects of the school's work and visit regularly to gather information for themselves. This is helping governors to hold leaders to account for the rate of improvement in their area of responsibility. Governors have a clearer picture of how well individuals and groups of pupils are doing because of the introduction of a new tracking system. For instance, governors are aware that pupils, in Year 2 in particular, are making faster rates of progress than at the time of the section 5 inspection. Consequently, governors have set more challenging targets which are aimed at raising standards even further.

Governors have been involved in drawing up the school development plan which clearly identifies suitable actions aimed at tackling the weaknesses identified at the section 5 inspection. However, the lack of milestones makes it difficult for governors to check that your actions are having a positive impact on pupils' achievements throughout the year and that improvements are sustained.

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

Since the section 5 inspection, the local authority has deployed teaching and learning consultants to advise staff on improving their practice. This has been effective in developing teachers' skills in assessing pupils' learning more accurately and providing work which meets the needs of pupils of different abilities.

The local authority has recently appointed an associate advisor, who has quickly grasped the school's strengths and areas for development. Subsequently, he has devised a plan of support which is targeted at helping the school deliver its plans for improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

David Carter

Her Majesty's Inspector