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16th October 2013

Mrs Christine Wright
Executive Headteacher
Holbeach Bank Primary School
Roman Bank
Holbeach Bank
PE12 8BX

Dear Mrs Wright

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Holbeach Bank Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 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 July 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:

- carry out an audit of mathematics progression in calculation in preparation for the planned changes to the curriculum and teaching
- ensure that teachers check that the improvements being made to lessons are having the desired impact on all pupils' learning
- sharpen up a few of the success criteria in the action plan so that it is easier to judge the impact of improvements on pupils' outcomes.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority contractor that provides support services to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Assessment information, marking and assessment in books and the

school's records of teachers' performance in lessons was scrutinised. I visited all three classes in the school to observe the teaching and learning.

Context

In September a newly qualified teacher was appointed

Main findings

Since the inspection the executive headteacher has continued the effective work that she started when appointed earlier in the year. Appointments have been made to strengthen the quality of teaching and leadership. The school action plan is prioritised sensibly so that the most important recommendations made at the last inspection are being tackled in an appropriate order. Some of the success criteria are not sufficiently linked to the expected outcomes of pupils. The strengthened governing body now have established roles and responsibilities so that they support and challenge the school efficiently. They are knowledgeable and offer a depth of expertise that is of great benefit to the executive headteacher.

Effective work has been carried out to strengthen the teaching. Teachers are now meeting the expectations required by the new marking policy. Advice is more helpful and time is set aside for pupils to respond to teachers' comments. Pupils are better grouped in lessons and work is being pitched more accurately to meet their needs. There is a tendency for teachers to work with one group so that others either work on their own or with a teaching assistant. When this happens, teachers do not check well enough the impact of the planned activities on learning.

The headteacher has laid plans to train staff to be better mathematics teachers and create a calculation policy to ensure good progression throughout the school. However, the school has not carried out an audit of where strengths and weaknesses in calculation needs are so that training can be tailored to have the most impact.

Procedures for the management of teacher performance are now much more effective. Teachers are all trying hard to improve their practice. Staff have benefited from training enabling them to fulfil the expectation to take the responsibility for analysing assessment information to check progress and for ensuring that pupils who need extra help receive it. Regular pupil progress meetings are successful in holding teachers to account for the impact of their 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 headteacher and governors have drawn on external support from a range of sources. The local authority support contractor has regular links with the school to check on progress. Work with the local collaboration of schools and with the partner school in the federation is helping to strengthen teaching. Teachers work with and learn from colleagues whose teaching is good and outstanding from these other schools.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire and the contractor that provides support services.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector