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21 October 2013

Mr Chris Edwards
Headteacher
Reedham Primary School
School Hill
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Norfolk
NR13 3TJ

Dear Mr Edwards

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Reedham Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 21 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 on 3 July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

You 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:

- Ensure that lessons are pitched at a level that is sufficiently high to challenge all pupils present.
- Ensure that at least one governor with school improvement expertise is recruited onto the governing body.
- Encourage teachers to routinely visit other schools to observe and share different and good practice.

Evidence

During the visit I held meetings with you, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement and action plans were evaluated together with other school improvement documentation. All three classes were visited in order to evaluate learning.

Since the last inspection you have been appointed are now in post.

Main findings

Since the last inspection the provisional results of assessments and examinations in 2013 have become available. The school is much smaller than average, and some groups are very small. This means that for 2013 the data needs to be interpreted with caution because only two pupils took Key Stage 2 examinations. This is too small a cohort to establish a trend. However the Key Stage 1 results are more reliable. These indicate a decline in attainment in 2013 to levels that were well below national average. Too few pupils reached their expected level, and too few exceeded it. The decline was particularly notable in writing in which boys showed particularly low levels, but was less marked in mathematics.

In class, pupils apply themselves well to the work in hand although sometimes they get bored when it is too easy. Lessons are planned in detail, and this sometimes leads to a lack of flexibility to pause and consolidate what has been learned, or to progress at a faster rate. In general, pupils learn at a level that is rarely above that expected for their age and do not progress as fast as they are able.

Assessment of pupils' progress has improved and is now accurate. Teachers have access to good indications of how well pupils are doing. This information is beginning to be used in the management of performance and to set targets that can be precisely monitored. The school is beginning to hold teachers to account for the performance of their pupils. Although the assessment that is performed is accurate, teachers do not always assess whether pupils have reached levels above expectations. This means that the school is not always aware that whether pupils can be challenged more.

You have introduced a much better lesson observation system. This will enable the identification of teaching that is not challenging pupils enough because the emphasis is on how well pupils learn rather than the activities of teachers. You have a good understanding of what the school needs to do to improve and a clear vision of how it will be done. The school's action plan is sufficiently detailed with clear timescales for improvement and responsibilities. However some of the targets for improvement lack precision. This means that progress towards them is difficult to monitor.

The external review of governance, recommended at the last inspection, has been undertaken. Weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been confirmed. It is clear that governors have, in the past, not offered sufficient challenge to staff and the headteacher. They have not held them to account for the performance of the school. Governors have now accepted that this needs to change and that they need to monitor in greater detail how the school is performing. They are now undertaking much relevant training. They have given good support to the school during the

recent period of considerable turbulence prior to the new headteacher being appointed.



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

Historically, the school has not forged the links with other schools and there has therefore not been the usual exchange of ideas or sharing of good practice. Teachers have not been able to visit other schools easily. This is now changing. The local authority has enabled a close working relationship to develop with a nearby 'outstanding' school and the headteacher and staff are increasingly receiving the support and challenge needed to drive up standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Seath
Her Majesty's Inspector