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23 October 2013

Mrs Jane Page
Ashby Fields Primary School
Wimborne Place
Ashby Fields
NN11 0YP

Dear Mrs Page

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ashby Fields Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 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:

- amend the school development plan, so that milestones to judge success are clearer, ensuring that the staff members responsible for monitoring the actions are not the same as those evaluating them
- ensure all staff benefit quickly from your new performance management system
- build on the improvements made in the collection of data, so that teachers can meet pupils' needs more effectively, especially the more able and those who are eligible for pupil premium funding
- increase the consistency and quality of marking.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you, the acting deputy headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, a representative of the local authority, and the headteacher of a local school who has agreed to offer support to your school. I also had a

telephone conversation with the Chair of the Governing Body. I evaluated the school improvement plan and a range of documentation. You took me on a tour of the school and we made brief visits to a range of classes.

Context

Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of significant changes in terms of the school's senior leadership. You took over as acting headteacher, on Monday 21 October. There is also a new acting deputy headteacher who was formerly the school's inclusion leader.

Main findings

You have improved procedures to monitor the progress pupils make. These include regular moderation of assessments of pupils' work. Consequently, data about pupils' achievement are more accurate and you are using these well to hold teachers, especially middle leaders, to account for their work. Although there are some improvements, teachers are not using these assessments well enough when planning lessons, particularly in terms of challenging the more-able pupils.

Pupils have more time to study mathematics, especially basic skills, and progress is being made as a result. Marking has improved. Pupils now know more about what to do to improve their work. However, you are aware that marking is still inconsistent and you are addressing this problem.

Your plans for improvement are not specific enough about when things will happen. Responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation have not been separated. Your analysis of the impact of pupil premium funding is not detailed enough.

Teachers have not had enough opportunities to see examples of good and outstanding teaching. Plans for this are in place but have not yet been implemented. The headteacher of the school offering this support is fully committed to helping your school improve.

Governors are aware of the challenges facing the school and have taken steps to address them. There is now a link governor for mathematics who is working with the subject leader. Some governors have undertaken training and focused learning walks have taken place.

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 representative knows the school well and he has taken steps to meet its needs, including assisting with changes in leadership. A local authority officer has attended meetings of the governing body and recruited two experienced people to add to its expertise. He has also arranged support for you and your teachers from a good school.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian McNeilly
Her Majesty's Inspector