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6 November 2013

Hilary Brewster  
Headteacher  
The Cowbit St Mary's (Endowed) CofE Primary  
Barrier Bank  
Cowbit  
PE12 6AL

Dear Ms Brewster

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Cowbit St Mary's (Endowed) CofE Primary**

Following my visit to your school on 30 October 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report my findings. 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 following the most recent section 5 inspection, which took place in May 2013.

This was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement at the inspection. 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 during the section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- develop a consistent, whole-school approach to the marking of work so that pupils' next steps, extension and challenge activities are promoted in ways that encourage learning and an effective written dialogue between pupils and the teacher
- create more resources and strategies to promote independent learning skills so that pupils are not held up, waiting for the teacher to help them each time they get stuck
- ensure the governing body develops the skills and systems that will enable governors to monitor and performance manage the headteacher effectively.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you, the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a group of older pupils to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also spoke on the telephone to the school's education adviser from the local authority. I evaluated the school development plan and I looked at the school's records of quality assurance and pupils' progress.

## **Context**

The headteacher joined the school just a few weeks prior to the last inspection. Since then, two full-time teachers and one part-time teacher have left and two new teachers have joined the school. Four new members of the governing body have been appointed. The number of pupils in the school has increased slightly.

## **Main findings**

Very rapid progress has been made since May 2013 because the headteacher has taken very decisive action to improve the quality of teaching and eradicate any that is inadequate. The headteacher has been clear and uncompromising about the standards she expects in the classroom and has also provided high quality training and professional development, including modelling good teaching, to help all teachers improve. Overall quality is now much better than at the time of the inspection in May.

There are much better systems in place to enable the school to identify if children are falling behind in their learning, and quickly arrange support to help them catch up. Relationships with parents are much improved; the headteacher takes time to meet children and parents each morning and families appreciate the weekly newsletter that shares information and explains the week's activities. Members of the governing body were very clear about the attributes they were looking for when they appointed the new headteacher and have welcomed a more open and collaborative approach.

Although there is evidence that the quality and presentation of pupils' work has improved, there are still some significant variations between different classes. There are some good examples of diagnostic marking and evidence of students giving feedback about their learning, but this is not always encouraged or used as effectively as it could be. The pupils spoken to were very clear that the school was now much better organised and that there is a wider range of activities. In some cases, pupils said that the teaching was better and the behaviour of pupils was much improved.

The school development plan correctly identifies the actions that the school needs to take to ensure that it is good by the time of the next inspection, but it is unclear

about how and when an evaluation of progress is going to be presented to the governing body.

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 has been very creative in calling upon a wide range of sources for additional and highly effective external support. Former colleagues and professional associates as well as the local authority education adviser have provided training for staff and the governing body and assisted with evaluating the progress that the school is making.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire County Council and the Diocese of Lincoln.

Yours sincerely

John Peckham  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**