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Rebecca Ireland
Headteacher
Abbots Ripton CofE Primary School
Wennington Road
Abbots Ripton
Cambridgeshire
PE28 2LT

Dear Ms Ireland

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Abbots Ripton CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 15 November 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:

- Revise its plans to bring about improvement ensuring that actions are in the right order to mirror the school's most pressing priorities; each action is linked to outcomes for pupils; criteria for success are measurable and quantified wherever possible; and dates for checks along the way are set to keep the pace of change energetic.
- Ensure that assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage reflects the national reformed framework's criteria for children reaching a good level of development.
- Develop links with other schools to share and access good practice and use as partners, for example, in agreeing teachers' assessments of the levels pupils are working at.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the senior teacher, and three governors to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I spoke to a local authority representative on the phone. The school action plans were evaluated and I checked the school's data on pupils' progress. You took me on a tour of the school, visiting all classes briefly. I looked at work in pupils' books and we discussed how you are managing the performance of staff.

Context

You were appointed as substantive headteacher from September, replacing the acting headteacher who left the school in July. One new full-time teacher joined the school in September and another part-time teacher joined in November.

Main findings

You have taken swift and decisive action to raise expectations for the performance of staff and the progress that pupils make. The targets that you have set for pupils' progress are challenging. Pupils are taking care to present their written work neatly in a fluent, cursive script. Staff and governors have been brought up to speed quickly in their understanding and use of data. You are using the information to check that every pupil is making sufficient progress, carefully analysing the findings and presenting them to staff and governors in a clear format. This highlights those aspects of learning requiring significant and rapid improvement and any groups or individuals that are underachieving. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage does not reflect recent changes in the framework. It will be important to establish the exact starting points for all pupils moving into Year 1 so that subsequent progress can be measured accurately.

Through your wide-ranging monitoring and scrutiny of the school's work you know what needs to be done to move the school to good and how to improve teaching and learning; you communicate this well. However, your written plans do not reflect the best practice. These plans require revision to be useful tools in bringing about change rapidly.

Governors have evaluated their own performance extensively. They share your ambition for the school and are supportive. They know that they have not always challenged the school well enough and held leaders accountable, but they are doing something about this determinedly. Governors are undertaking intensive training externally as individuals and in-house as a team. They are familiarising themselves with data and visiting the school so that they are in a position to ask searching questions about the school's 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 local authority has supported the governing body in recruiting a substantive headteacher and in providing training. The Early Years team is supporting staff in Reception. You are benefiting from the induction programme for headteachers and the senior teacher/mathematics leader has access to regular briefings led by advisers. The school would benefit from additional support through a link, brokered by the local authority with a good school that has a proven track record of success.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Diocese of Ely and the Director of Children's Services for Cambridgeshire.

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman
Her Majesty's Inspector