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Moira Cordon
Headteacher
Hawthorne Primary and Nursery School
School Walk
Bestwood Village
NG6 8TL

Dear Mrs Cordon

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hawthorne Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 18 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 April 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:

- increase more rapidly the number of pupils making progress at a better-than-expected rate in reading, writing and mathematics
- ensure this is a priority for leaders, governors and staff by making it a central part of data analysis, target setting for every teacher, judging lessons and evaluating the impact of the school improvement plan.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, three members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan. You and the deputy headteacher accompanied me on brief visits to each classroom, during which I looked at pupils' books.

Context

Since the inspection there have been changes to leadership and teaching staff, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

Main findings

The most recent unvalidated national data for achievement indicates that the main barrier to good overall effectiveness is too few pupils accelerating their progress above the expected rate. School leaders and the Governing Body are not focussing sufficiently on this particular aspect of pupils' achievement when they are setting targets and evaluating the school's performance. They are certainly focussed on improving pupils' outcomes but they judge their work more by its impact on raising the average scores for groups of pupils rather than whether they are enabling each and every pupil to make good progress.

Pupils' achievement has recently improved as a result of the way the school is introducing the improvements to teaching recommended in the previous inspection. Marking is considerably better because it is now based on a systematic approach to helping pupils improve their work by setting additional challenges and providing the time to tackle them. In some classes, pupils are absorbed in interesting activities which involve writing at length or solving mathematical problems and the more-able are suitably stretched. Such strengths are not consistently found in every class.

The actions in the school improvement plan are appropriate for implementing the recommendations in the previous inspection. Leaders help teachers to improve by systematically observing their work, giving them guidance and later checking that their guidance has been followed. Since the inspection, the Governing Body has improved its methods for gathering information about strengths and weaknesses in the school's work. They demonstrate a growing understanding of the questions they need to ask to ensure that all pupils are making as much progress as they can.

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 provides effective support adapted to the school's needs. Arranging a partnership with an improving school in similar circumstances has been particularly helpful and Hawthorne has used this well to improve leadership and teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

John Rutherford, **Her Majesty's Inspector**