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Mr Michael Waters
Headteacher
Bollinbrook CofE Primary School
Abbey Road
Macclesfield
Cheshire
SK10 3AT

Dear Mr Waters

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bollinbrook CofE Primary School, Cheshire East

Following my visit to your school on 21 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 September 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:

- work with external partners to:
 - Ensure that the school's Raising Achievement Plan clearly sets out intended impact of each action on the achievement of every group of pupils, particularly of more able pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are supported by the pupil premium funding.
 - Ensure that any teaching that is less than good is swiftly eradicated.
 - Ensure that the considerable gains made since the last inspection in the progress of some of the pupils at both Key Stages in reading, writing and mathematics, are established consistently across the school.
 - Maintain effective support for the Governing Body, in order to increase their capacity to ask challenging questions about the school's performance.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, some other senior leaders and the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. A representative of the local authority was also contacted by telephone. The school Raising Achievement Plan was evaluated. A brief tour of the school was made, including some short visits to classes. A number of documents were scrutinised, for example, information on pupils' progress, the outcomes of monitoring activities and the impact of performance management. It was not possible, on the day of my visit, to meet with all senior and middle leaders and this will be the focus of a further visit.

Context

There have been no significant changes to the school since the section 5 inspection, which judged the school to require improvement.

Main findings

You and senior leaders whom I met during my visit share a good understanding of what the school needs to do in order to become good. There is a strong commitment and enthusiasm on your part and that of the governing body to ensuring that the school makes that journey successfully as quickly as possible.

In the short time since the last inspection you have made some considerable progress in tackling the areas for improvement recommended at the time of that inspection. For example, you have raised some aspects of pupils' achievement and improved some aspects of the quality of teaching. Staff have been well supported by professional development but you are aware that there remains much work to be done before the whole school is consistently strong in all aspects of its work.

The Raising Achievement plan is fit for purpose, setting a clear agenda for the school's improvement. Nevertheless some minor adjustments would make it sharper and more accessible to all who need to use it. More detail is needed in particular on how the various actions will raise the achievement of key groups of pupils.

You have adopted a systematic approach to improving the school. You have put in place, for example, robust procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and for performance management. Records of your own and external moderation show that most teaching is now good, with some that is outstanding and the school can point to examples of weaknesses in teaching being tackled effectively through rigorous targets, support plans and tailored professional development.

However there remains too much teaching that requires improvement and initiatives to improve teaching and other aspects of the school's work are not yet all securely and consistently in place. For example, the sample of pupils' work seen during my visit showed that feedback from marking is not yet consistently helpful or challenging enough across year groups and subjects. You might consider it useful to underpin judgements about teaching even more consistently and coherently by using the Teacher Standards.

The recently re-structured governing body, including some new members, clearly care passionately about improving the school and have a wide range of skills and experience at their disposal. They already challenge the school and are keen to improve their knowledge in order to have the capacity to do so further.

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

As a school that Requires Improvement you benefit from enhanced support from the local authority. This is already under negotiation. You also draw effectively on the services of an independent consultant, the local teaching school alliance and an outstanding local school. It is too early as yet for the impact of this support to be fully seen in all aspects of the school's work.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cheshire East and as below.

Yours sincerely

Susan Wareing

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority