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Sue Giles
Headteacher
Henham and Ugley Primary and Nursery School
School Lane
Henham
Bishop's Stortford
CM22 6BP

Dear Mrs Giles

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Henham and Ugley Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 17 December 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. You should take further action to:

- ensure your action plan identifies more clearly the intended impact of improvement activities on pupils' learning, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of leadership and management.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you, two governors, two parents, two staff, a group of pupils and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We undertook visits to every class and I evaluated the school improvement plan and other documentation with you.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the previous inspection. In order to increase the pace of improvement, the school has sought opportunities for the development of leadership through work with a local teaching school alliance. This will commence next term.

Main findings

You are addressing the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection with determination. Your development plan identifies how you will bring about the required improvements. It includes clear information for governors and staff about actions to be taken and who is responsible for them. It needs, however, to record more clearly what the impact of the individual actions will be on pupils' learning, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of leadership and management. This will make it easier to measure the impact of the plan and so allow staff and governors to respond quickly if the actions are not making the differences intended.

You are working well with all staff to reshape the curriculum. A pilot is underway in which half-termly topics link learning more meaningfully across curriculum areas. Pupils say that they are learning more quickly and that they are more interested and engaged because of this. Through monitoring, you have identified further improvements to address in the terms ahead. In particular, you are giving focus to ensuring that all children have equal opportunities to show their understanding of the wider curriculum. Current analysis, which is supported by discussion with pupils, shows that the quality of writing across the curriculum has improved because pupils are being offered the opportunity to apply their skills meaningfully.

Staff are increasingly reflective about their practice. Each week they consider how well their teaching is enabling all pupils to learn and are identifying ways of making learning better for all children. Staff are working together to review each other's practice and sometimes to review the learning and progress made by children in their partner's lessons. This is providing you with a very strong evidence base of the ways in which children at Henham and Ugley learn best. Where practice is less strong, you are providing training to improve these aspects. In subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers are evaluating their own practice. This is supporting subject leaders to address the key priorities more effectively.

Early analysis of progress this term shows that almost all groups of pupils are on track to make expected and better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Parents appreciate the more detailed information teachers are sharing about their children's learning and understand the targets set for them well.

Governors continue to monitor the school and are recording in more detail the outcomes of their visits to see how well improvements are happening. You are

holding staff to account for pupils' progress and have agreed criteria for measuring and rewarding the performance of teachers. To accelerate improvement, the Full Governing Body has agreed to fund collaborative work with a local teaching school alliance. This initiative reflects the determination of governor to support your drive to move more teaching to be consistently good and outstanding.

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

You have responded positively to the increased level of support from the local authority and have undertaken joint lesson observations with an adviser. These observations are confirming that you have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of provision and are able to target additional support where required.

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

Yours sincerely

Prue Rayner
Her Majesty's Inspector