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Mrs Anne Cook
Headteacher
Leavesden JMI School
High Road
Leavesden
Watford
WD25 7QZ

Dear Mrs Cook

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Leavesden JMI School

Following my visit to your school on 23 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 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 October 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:

- extend the school action plan so that it covers the Summer Term and ensure it continues to be driven by pupils' progress.
- ensure that a high calibre headteacher is appointed through a rigorous recruitment process so that the school continues to build on the progress it has made to date.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you and other senior leaders, the special educational needs co-ordinator, 4 pupils from Key Stage 2, two members of the governing body and the District School Effectiveness Adviser from the local authority

to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I visited every class briefly, accompanied by you. I also checked the school's single central record of recruitment checks on staff. I evaluated the school improvement plan.

Context

Since the previous inspection, a teacher of Year 3 has left the school. You are due to retire at the end of the academic year and plans are in place to recruit a new headteacher.

Main findings

You have produced a simple core improvement plan for the academic year, and have produced a more detailed action plan from this which covers the current term. It is essential that you continue to monitor progress against your actions regularly so that existing plans can be amended in a timely fashion, with a view to informing your plan for the summer term.

Having received guidance from another school, you have reviewed your criteria for placing pupils on the special educational needs register. You have improved your systems for monitoring progress of different groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those entitled to pupil premium funding. The evidence you showed me demonstrates that you are steadily closing the gap in attainment between pupils entitled to pupil premium and others in the school.

You have revised your marking policy so that teachers now write more helpful comments to which pupils are expected to respond. During my visits to lessons, I saw some helpful marking with challenging follow-up questions to which pupils had responded.

Your observations of the quality of teaching also take account of the marking of pupils' books and pupils' outcomes. Your judgements on the quality of teaching have been validated by external sources, including a Local Leader of Education.

An external review of the governing body has taken place and the governing body is acting on its findings, having produced their own action plan. Governors have responded positively to the outcome of the review, and are tracking the progress of those pupils entitled to pupil premium funding more closely. One governor with specific responsibility for this group of pupils demonstrated a sound awareness of how the fund is being spent and what impact this is starting to have on their outcomes.

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 a very good understanding of the factors contributing to the school's underperformance, and provides valuable challenge and support. Plans are in place for a thorough review of the school's performance led by representatives of the local authority. The Local Leader of Education has supported leadership, and links made with other schools are encouraging teachers to develop and improve their practice. The local authority has also worked well the governing body in helping them present a greater degree of challenge and in developing their understanding of information relating to pupils' progress.

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

Yours sincerely

John Daniell
Her Majesty's Inspector