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Mrs M Douglas
Headteacher
Marsh Hill Primary School
Marsh Hill
Erdington
Birmingham
B23 7HY

Dear Mrs Douglas

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Marsh Hill Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 3 February 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 ensure that:

- all teachers' marking and feedback gives pupils precise guidance about how to improve their work and that pupils have time to respond to the comments
- all pupils, in all subjects, have opportunities to write for extended periods of time in order to practise their writing skills.

Evidence

During the visit I met with you and other school leaders to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Meetings were held with three members of the governing body including the Chair of Governors, four middle leaders, a representative of the local authority and a Local Leader of Education who is providing support for school

leaders and teachers. You showed me around the school and we visited every class to see the pupils at work. I looked at a number of pupils' books. I evaluated the school improvement plan. I looked at a range of documents, including the school's information about pupils' progress and attainment.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the inspection in June.

Main findings

The headteacher, school leaders and the governing body acted quickly to address the issues for improvement identified in the recent inspection. School leaders are taking appropriate and effective action to improve the quality of teaching and learning and increase the rate of pupils' progress. Existing good practice within the school has been shared. Personalised training has been provided for staff whose teaching was identified as requiring improvement. Assessments of the quality of teaching carried out by school leaders and those from outside supporting the school show that the quality of teaching has improved. The school marking policy has been revised and as a result teachers are better at letting pupils know precisely what to do to improve their work. However, as a result of the work scrutiny it was apparent that the quality of marking is inconsistent across subjects and individual teachers. Leaders have increased the number of lessons that pupils have to practice their writing. This is making a positive difference to pupils' writing. However, not all teachers are ensuring pupils have enough opportunities to write for extended periods of time.

Actions in the new improvement plan are clear and appropriate. They address the areas requiring improvement identified by the inspection. Pupils' progress milestones are identified and used to track pupils' progress on a termly basis in all year groups including in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Governors said that the school leaders have been 'energised' by recent changes and the new strategies to support pupil progress. Governors continue to monitor the effect of new initiatives and now have a better understanding of the impact the pupil premium grant spending has on the progress of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Governors say that they can see a definite improvement in the standard of pupils' 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 provides effective support for the school. The Local Leader of Education is supporting the Early Years Foundation Stage leader in improving the

outside play experiences of children and the development of the children's language and communication skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Humphries
Her Majesty's Inspector