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14 February 2014

Andrew Emms
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Emms

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bacton Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 13 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 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:

- make sure that action plans and reports focus on evaluating the impact of the actions taken on pupils' good progress
- make sure that the governing body gain first-hand evidence to support its own evaluation of its effectiveness in supporting the improvements
- use the school inspection handbook to benchmark how well the school's evidence supports good performance for each judgement.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, the literacy leader, two governors and the primary performance adviser from the local authority,

to discuss the action taken since the previous inspection and the first monitoring inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. I met the school council and spoke to some parents when they brought their children to school. I toured the classrooms with you. Three governors came to the formal feedback at the end of the day.

Context

Three new governors have been appointed to the governing body.

Main findings

Since my previous monitoring inspection there has been a significantly positive shift in staff's confidence and in senior leaders' ability to carry out their strategic responsibilities. Although there is still work to do so that the governing body plays a full part in school improvement, the weaknesses that I identified in October no longer exist. Interim arrangements for leading the governing body have helped to give you the appropriate support to move forward with the action plan. The three new governors bring additional, relevant expertise and, with the imminent arrival of an experienced Chair, the governing body is in a much better position to fulfil its responsibilities. It has had reports and presentations from the leaders for literacy and mathematics, and now needs to gain its own evidence to increase the challenge to you, and also to evaluate its own contribution to school improvements.

Your revised action plan is now fit for purpose. Responsibilities are clearly set out and this has made a significant difference to the work of leaders for literacy and mathematics. They now have the time, direction and responsibility to get to with the improvements needed. This gives you more time for monitoring the quality of teaching. Lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and analysis of data to identify underachievement now take place routinely. Since my last visit, you have continued the frequent staff meetings, with the focus firmly on improving teaching, and this provides staff with the professional and supportive discussions that are helping them to reflect on their classroom practice. You have focused particularly on what good teaching looks like. Improvements in teachers' practice were evident from our tour of the classrooms:

- pupils frequently use their targets to think about what they are learning and how well they are doing
- displays help pupils to remember how to work things out for themselves
- the teaching of phonics is better, although there is still room for improvement here
- improved opportunities to write at length means that pupils are confident in their writing.

Action plans and reports focus on measurements of pupils' expected progress, rather than on the proportions making good progress. Similarly, you are not benchmarking

how close teaching, pupils' learning and behaviour, and leadership and management are to good performance. Targets for pupils' attainment at the end of the academic year are clear but the tracking does not show how well these milestones will lead to long-term targets for the end of each key stage, particularly for when pupils will reach the end of Year 6.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. A third monitoring inspection will be planned for the autumn term.

External support

When I came in October, support from the local authority, particularly to the governing body, had not been proactive enough. Since then, the linked adviser has supported you with observing teaching and has brokered the appointment of an experienced Chair, who will start soon and stay for 12 months to improve the governing body's practice. In addition to working with your local cluster of schools, you have started to link with other local schools, specifically to develop subject leadership. This is well received by the subject leaders, and they now have their own action plans that link appropriately to the school action plan.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the governing body and the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk.

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector