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Mrs Angela Boxall
Headteacher
Warboys Community Primary School
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Dear Mrs Boxall

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Warboys Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 March 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 not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- raise standards in writing across the school
- strengthen leadership so that all senior and middle leaders positively impact on the quality of teaching and learning
- improve handwriting and presentation in Year 3 and Year 4.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, two middle leaders, five members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also evaluated the school action plans, including that of the governing body, and the school's monitoring and assessment documentation. We looked at a sample of pupils' writing from Key Stage 2. You

accompanied me during visits to all classes in the school, where we observed teaching and looked at pupils' work.

Context

One teacher left the school and has been replaced since the inspection.

Main findings

Although your action plan identifies the right priorities for improvement, the pace of change is not swift enough. Aspects of teaching have improved but inconsistencies remain and are limiting the impact of your plans.

Pupils are making better progress in reading and mathematics. In contrast, standards in writing are too low in all year groups. Your assessment data indicates that pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium are under-achieving more than other pupils. The gaps reported in the recent inspection are currently widening.

The standard of handwriting across the school is too varied. Your work in this area has been more successful in Key Stage 1 and Years 5 and 6. Pupils' work in these classes shows clear signs of improvement. Standards of handwriting are much lower in Years 3 and 4, and there is very little evidence of progress since the inspection. Some pupils' handwriting has worsened during this time. Teachers' expectations of how pupils write are far too low in this part of the school.

Your strategies to improve assessment are working. Teachers are more accurately identifying the levels that pupils are working at. Marking is also improving. Pupils now receive better quality feedback from teachers about their work. More needs to be done to make sure that pupils act on the guidance that they are being given. An example of effective marking, seen in Key Stage 1, identified precisely what a pupil's next steps were. The pupil responded in the next piece of work, completing it successfully. Where marking is having less impact, teachers write the same thing time and again, but pupils continue to make the same errors. This is of particular concern in Years 3 and 4, where teachers are not correcting basic errors such as writing capital letters in the middle of sentences. As a result, pupils who were making such mistakes in September 2013 are still doing so now.

The impact of your senior and middle leaders is mixed. Some are not contributing sufficiently to improving the quality of teaching and are too slow to identify and tackle weaknesses. Others make good use of their leadership time to look at pupils' work and teachers' planning, making useful suggestions for improvements.

Governance is improving. The governing body commissioned the local authority to undertake an external review of their work in January 2014. Governors are visiting school more frequently and are asking you and senior leaders much better questions about the pupil progress and the quality of teaching.

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 is providing support from an improvement advisor and a mathematics advisor. In addition, two teachers have been attending an improving teacher programme. You receive leadership support, which has included visiting an outstanding school in London. The local authority has identified that improvement is not rapid enough. Consequently, you have recently received a proposal from the local authority outlining how it intends to increase the amount of support that they provide the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Christopher Moodie
Her Majesty's Inspector