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Mrs Lynne Wildman  
Headteacher  
Weldon Church of England Primary School  
Chapel Road  
Weldon  
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NN17 3HP

Dear Mrs Wildman

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Weldon Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 11 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 December 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:

- specify clearly in the school development plan the targets for the proportion of pupils who will make better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics in each year group to help leaders and governors to measure the success of teaching over time
- make sure that the recommendations and actions that come from the external review of governance lead to demonstrable improvement in this aspect of the leadership and management of the school.

During the visit, I held meetings with you and four members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body. I also met with a representative of the local authority. We visited all classes to look at the learning that was taking place. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's information about pupils' progress, a sample of pupils' work and the school's development plan.

## **Context**

There has been a delay in the publication of the revised school inspection report until March 2014. This was because Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) identified a need to obtain some additional evidence since the inspection of 5 December 2013. One HMI conducted a visit on 24 January 2014 and, although the inspection grades remained unchanged, some changes were made to the text of the report, including a requirement that there should be an external review of governance.

## **Main findings**

You are acting swiftly to improve teaching, particularly in mathematics. You are raising teachers' expectations and making sure that the training given to staff is improving their practice. The training for leadership in mathematics is leading to more robust checking, for example of how well pupils are progressing with developing their mental mathematics skills. An initiative to provide a 'challenge' for all pupils at the start of mathematics sessions is successful in raising the profile of the subject and hooking pupils' interest. As a result of your own evaluation of pupils' progress, you are considering revising the school's approach to problem solving in mathematics. You are building on successes gained so far in securing more parental help in mathematics learning outside of school time.

The school is making use of its links with the Corby Partnership Group, some of which is brokered and funded by the local authority. Consequently, you are refining the way you conduct lesson observations, in the light of the joint observations you conducted with the headteacher of an outstanding school. A specialist leader in education from within the partnership has worked with the subject leader for mathematics and this is sharpening up the quality of assessment in the subject.

Governors are taking opportunities to make use of online training to further develop their skills in a number of areas, including how to evaluate the use of the extra government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals. Governors understand the need now to press on quickly with an external review of governance.

Senior leaders have engaged staff and governors in the process of development planning. The development plan makes clear the actions being undertaken, including making effective use of the expertise found in other schools in the partnership group. The plan includes some measurable criteria but does not make sufficiently clear what proportions of pupils will be making better than expected progress. Although some of the governors' committees check that actions are being carried out effectively, the school development plan does not show how governors will be involved in holding the school leaders to account for pupils' achievement.

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 brokered and part-funded the school's access to support through the Corby Partnership Group. It is improving leadership skills in mathematics and the quality of teaching. There are strong links at senior leadership level with an outstanding school. The potential for sharing best practice in school governance that exists within the partnership group, to help improve this aspect of leadership and management at the school, is underused.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children, Schools and Families for Northamptonshire and the Diocese for Peterborough.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**