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Mrs Marlene Ranshaw
Headteacher
Elliston Primary School
Elliston Street
Cleethorpes
North East Lincolnshire
DN35 7HT

Dear Mrs Ranshaw

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Elliston Primary School, North East Lincolnshire

Following my visit to your school on 10 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 November 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 the school improvement plan includes specific targets for the achievement of pupils in each year group so that governors and senior leaders can check the school is on course to become a good school
- ensure governors focus their link visits on evaluating the impact of planned actions in the school improvement plan
- arrange opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding teaching in other schools in order to improve their practice.

Evidence

During the visit I held meetings with you, other senior leaders, members of the governing body, including the Chair and vice chair and a group of pupils. We

undertook a tour of the school when literacy and numeracy lessons were taking place and observed the pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. I evaluated the school improvement plan and looked at other documents including information on pupil progress, the quality of teaching and governing body meetings.

Context

Since the last inspection you have announced you will retire at the end of August 2014, and a recruitment process for a new headteacher will begin soon. One teacher retired at the end of December 2013 and a supply teacher who worked in the school at the time of the last inspection has left the school. A teacher has returned from maternity leave and another teacher has moved from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. One new parent governor has been appointed, but efforts to fill three other vacancies on the governing body have been unsuccessful.

Main findings

You have put together appropriate plans to address the areas for improvement and the actions you are taking are beginning to improve the quality of teaching. However, the school improvement plan does not include targets for achievement in each year group. Consequently, senior leaders and governors are unclear as to whether the school is on course to become a good school.

Systems to track the progress pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics are much improved. Pupils' work is assessed on an on-going basis and data on their progress is collected and analysed each half-term. Pupils making slower progress are quickly identified and receive additional support. Further training has been provided for teaching assistants and they are now deployed to deliver additional support programmes. Senior leaders are checking the impact of these programmes and recent data shows pupils receiving this support are making accelerated progress.

On the tour of the school it was evident that teachers are grouping pupils carefully and providing work matched to the needs of each group. However, in some classrooms, some groups did not understand the task they had been given and were unsure what to do. Teachers do have higher expectations for the quality of presentation and spelling and consequently written work in pupils' books is beginning to improve. There are more opportunities for pupils to undertake mathematics investigations and this is helping them to develop the skills to solve problems for themselves.

There are plans in place to support any teaching that is not of a good standard. However the school is not doing enough to develop the practice of other teachers. Some efforts are being made to share best practice within the school, but there are not enough opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding practice in other schools.

Members of the governing body have recently received training on the use of school performance data and this has helped them to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have established a Standards Committee and this committee now meets every half-term. The committee is using data more effectively and has begun to challenge senior leaders where pupils' progress is slower than expected. However, governors are less clear about the wider impact of actions within the school improvement plan because the link visits they make are not sufficiently focused on the key priorities for improvement.

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 supported the school to develop improvement plans and will support governors with the recruitment of a new headteacher. The local authority has undertaken the external review of governance. This process has taken some time and is not yet fully complete. Consequently, the governing body are yet to receive the findings of the review and do not have an action-plan setting out how governance will be strengthened. In addition, the vacancy for a local authority governor has not been filled. The local authority has agreed to attend future Standards Committee meetings in order to develop the skills of governors in holding senior leaders to account. The governors recognise the school would benefit from stronger external links and are actively exploring conversion to academy status with the support of a suitable sponsor.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector