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Colin Gynn
Headteacher
Bracken Leas Primary School
Magdalen Meadows
Brackley
NN13 6LF

Dear Mr Gynn

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bracken Leas Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 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 January 2014. 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:

- focus more training and support for teachers to help them measure how much progress pupils should be making in lessons and over time, particularly in mathematics.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and three teachers who have management responsibilities. Her Majesty's Inspector held a telephone conversation with one of the local authority's senior school improvement managers and met with two governors; the Chair of the Governing Body and a member of one of the governor committees. The inspector visited classes with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, looked at assessments of pupils' progress and performance and scrutinised the school's post-Ofsted action plan.

Main findings

Senior leaders, staff and governors have already done a great deal to improve the school. Assessments of pupils' progress over time point to a marked improvement to their achievement compared with last year's national test results. Pupils across the school are making good rates of progress in reading and writing, and there is convincing evidence that they are also doing much better in mathematics. Most importantly, the teaching is clearly strong enough to sustain this improvement and the evidence from assessment data, pupils' books and brief discussions with pupils, staff and governors shows that Bracken Leas is already close to being a good school. Teachers with management responsibilities work closely with governors and senior leaders to check, monitor and support staff when scrutinising pupils' work and observing lessons. The school's action plans help to guide these monitoring activities and enable staff and governors to gauge the impact of the school's actions on improving teaching still further. The school should now ensure that all teachers are clear about how much progress pupils should be making in lessons and over time, particularly in mathematics. A good start has already been made as staff are already reviewing the way pupils are taught different methods of calculation in mathematics.

Pupils are keen to do well and are exceptionally well behaved and attentive in lessons. It is no surprise to find high attendance rates and pupils that are energised by the exciting topics and themes that teachers plan for pupils to study. Activities and work include follow-ups to an excellent range of educational visits and activities that are already providing opportunities for pupils to apply their reading, writing and mathematics skills in other subjects.

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 school is making good use of a local collaboration of schools to develop school-to-school support that focuses on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The local authority provides light-touch support in recognition of the fact, and rightly, that this is close to being judged as a good school.

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

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Her Majesty's Inspector