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Tracey Ali
Headteacher
Arnett Hills Junior Mixed and Infant School
Berry Lane
Rickmansworth
WD3 4BT

Dear Mrs Ali

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Arnett Hills Junior Mixed and Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 27 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 October 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:

- raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, three 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, and the school's assessment documentation. You accompanied me during visits to all classes in the school, where we observed teaching and looked at pupils' work.

Main findings

You have a clear understanding of how to tackle the issues identified in the recent inspection. The quality of pupils' writing was the main area of concern and you are taking action to improve the teaching of writing across the school. As a result, almost all pupils are making better progress. Some pupils' writing is of an exceptionally high standard, and many pupils in Key Stage 2 are writing at a standard above that expected for their age. The accuracy of assessment in writing is improving because you have dedicated time to developing teachers' skills in this area. The assessments that teachers make are broadly accurate now, but are not yet precise enough to present school leaders with a very clear understanding of how well pupils are progressing. In particular, some of the assessments do not reflect the high quality of the writing. This in turn is leading to teachers and leaders setting targets that are not ambitious enough.

Since the inspection, teachers are providing pupils with a broader range of opportunities to practise their writing skills in subjects such as history and science. Pupils are responding well to this, and some of their writing reflects their enthusiasm. For example, a trip to Portsmouth to visit the Marie Rose inspired some pupils in Year 4 to produce written work of a very high standard. Similarly, pupils in Year 5 are writing very thoughtful and well-constructed letters to you, hoping to persuade you to let them visit London. The development of early writing is also going well. Pupils in the Reception class are learning to write in a structured way through a range of exciting and relevant activities in both the indoor and outdoor parts of their classroom. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are reading and writing at a higher level than nationally expected.

Your plans are effective. They outline each of the steps that you are taking and how you measure impact. Your systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching are well-structured and are leading to changes. You know, for example, that one teacher has developed a very successful way of making sure that pupils know what they need to do to improve. You are spreading this method across the school so that all classes can benefit from it. Governors are holding school leaders to account while providing support and encouragement. They are asking the right questions more frequently and are visiting school to see the evidence of progress for themselves.

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 you with good support. This has contributed to the progress that the school has made since the inspection. An Improvement Partner is supporting your evaluation of teaching, and knows the school well. An advisory teacher is supporting the development of literacy and another advisor is helping with

assessment. This support is targeting those areas where the school needs to improve the most.

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

Yours sincerely

Christopher Moodie
Her Majesty's Inspector