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Helen Smith
Headteacher
Greens Norton Church of England Primary School
Calvert Road
Greens Norton
Towcester
NN12 8DD

Dear Miss Smith

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Greens Norton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 24 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:

- improve the accuracy of pupil progress data through teachers undertaking moderation activities in reading and mathematics
- increase teacher accountability for the progress of their pupils
- ensure pupils understand how to improve their work
- share your revised improvement plan with all members of staff and governors

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the chair of governors and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last

inspection. I evaluated your school improvement plan. You took me on a tour of the school and we made brief visits to a range of classes.

Context

One of your teachers is currently absent on a long-term basis.

Main findings

You accept the findings of your school's recent inspection and you are committed to addressing the areas for improvement. You are determined to make teachers more accountable for the progress of their pupils and you insist that underachievement is addressed where it is seen.

You are committing a great deal of time on a daily basis to improving the quality of teaching. This is your priority at the moment. While this is understandable, it has meant that some other areas for improvement have not received as much attention as necessary.

The recent inspection identified that not all data relating to pupil progress was reliable. All teachers have now moderated pupils' written work with colleagues from other schools and they now have better skills to make more accurate judgements. You plan to repeat this process for reading and mathematics. It is vital that this happens by the end of this academic year.

Pupils now have more opportunities to write at length, particularly in the consistent application of the 'Big Write' strategy. There is an expectation that teachers provide an opportunity for extended writing every fortnight, and that this should include subjects other than literacy. This is carried out well by some teachers but not by all of them.

At the time of your school's inspection, targets were set for your pupils but they were not routinely referred to by teachers and were therefore ineffective. This practice is changing, albeit slowly. Some of the targets need to be more specific if they are to be most useful.

To help improve achievement in mathematics you have increased the amount of times tables activities. This is having a positive impact on your Year 3 and 4 pupils; you plan to evaluate the impact on other classes soon. Marking of mathematics work is more consistent and you insist that teachers correct every exercise. Time is given to pupils to respond to marking; some pupils would benefit from an extra challenge as part of the marking process.

You have revised the support plans for all of your pupils with special educational needs and for pupils who are underachieving. Your teaching assistants receive an

individualised timetable on a weekly basis to ensure that they are deployed effectively.

You have the support of your governing body and they are becoming more capable of holding you to account. The full governing body and the three sub-committees have all met since your recent inspection. Three governors have had training to help them becoming more effective in undertaking their roles relating to finance; further training on pupil achievement data is planned. The governors are committed to undertaking a skills audit and to taking part in the scrutiny of books more regularly.

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

Your local authority adviser understands the issues facing your school. She has helped to broker effective support for you from the headteacher of a good, local school. Your adviser visits on a half-termly basis to review the school's progress. However, she keeps in touch more regularly than this and offers support and feedback, for example, in the revision of your school improvement plan. The local authority commissioned an external review of governance; this has not yet been completed and its conclusion should be made a priority. The local authority's Education Entitlement Service has been ineffective in providing the practical support you need and this needs to be rectified as a matter of urgency.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian McNeilly
Her Majesty's Inspector