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Marie Staley
Headteacher
Trinity Road Primary School
Trinity Road
Chelmsford
CM2 6HS

Dear Mrs Staley

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Trinity Road Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 25 April 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:

- ensure that, when evaluating the quality of teaching, senior and subject leaders take into account a wide range of evidence to judge whether practice is at least good;
- embed the improved marking and assessment strategies across all classes so that pupils' progress is accelerated, particularly in spelling and grammar.

Evidence

During the visit I held meetings with you and members of your senior leadership team. I met three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. I also spoke to three subject leaders and teaching assistants. I evaluated the school's post-Ofsted

action plan and other documentation. We carried out brief visits to lessons and spoke to staff and pupils about their work.

Context

You will leave the school at the end of this term to take up leadership of another school. With the help of the local authority, governors are actively seeking to recruit a new headteacher. The school's inclusion manager has now joined your senior leadership team to strengthen its effectiveness and capacity.

Main findings

After the inspection you took swift action to tackle the identified weaknesses, particularly focussing on improving pupils' writing and raising teachers' expectations of what pupils could achieve, including the more able pupils. With the support of governors and your senior team, you check improvement through frequent reviews of the progress made against key priorities. Pupils are now reflecting more carefully on the quality of their work. As we visited classes, I noted that pupils often discuss what they are doing with their partner and check whether it is good enough. One pupil remarked that '*said*' was a '*boring word*' and that '*shouted*' or '*exclaimed*' would be much better. There was a positive buzz for learning in classrooms. When I asked a group of boys whether they had noticed anything different since the inspection they said that teachers wanted them to read more and that very good writing was insisted upon. One boy added: '*I read a whole book during the holiday; I like reading because we can bring our own favourite books from home and the Reader of the Week chart encourages us*'. Your guidance for parents (Writing Levels for Parents) is encouraging good liaison between school and home. These initiatives, added to the better use of working walls and the renewed focus on constructing sentences accurately, are accelerating pupils' progress.

Governors articulate clearly their intention to check whether pupils' progress is good enough and they continue to refine their understanding of data. The external review of the school's use of the Pupil Premium funding, a recommendation of the inspection, is due to take place in May. With your senior leaders you are monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The current systems to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching and its impact on learning are not sufficiently broad. Lesson observation are helpful to staff but you need to take into account a wider range of evidence to judge whether practice over time is of a sufficiently high standard to warrant a 'good' judgement. Evidence should include the range, quality and accuracy of work in books and the impact of teaching assistants on developing pupils' basic skills. It should also check how well subject leaders and teachers contribute to your key priorities for improvement because some work, such as quality of presentation and handwriting, precision in the marking of spelling and grammar and general use of assessment require consolidation so that pupils' progress is accelerated. Encouraging teachers to share best practice and have confidence in what they do should ensure that the school makes rapid strides towards becoming a good or better school.

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 welcomes the support that the Chelmsford Network of Schools and the local authority provide. The recommendations identified through the commissioned review of the work of teaching assistants that took place in March 2014 are being addressed. Teaching assistants are increasingly aware of the need to check that their support is closing the attainment gaps between different groups of pupils regardless of pupils' low prior attainment or personal circumstances. The Standards and Excellence Commissioner checks progress regularly and his notes of visits clearly identify successes and where further work is required. Specialist advisers and the school Improvement Partner are contributing to improvement in teaching and learning. The positive impact of this work is beginning to show. For example, subject leaders report better understanding of data, teachers plan more challenging work for able pupils and, across all classes pupils respond well to higher demands to improve their reading and writing skills. Current achievement information shows that the rate of progress is accelerating. Prediction for the 2014 results appears to indicate better outcomes than in previous years.

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

Yours sincerely

Marianick Ellender-Gelé
Her Majesty's Inspector