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Roger Mitchell
Headteacher
Ripple Primary School
Suffolk Road
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Essex
IG11 7QS

Dear Mr Mitchell

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ripple Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 28 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 not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement'. The school should take immediate action to:

- sharpen improvement plans so that they include milestones, success criteria and rigorous evaluation procedures that detail how senior leaders and the governing body will check that the school's actions are making a difference to pupils' learning and the quality of teaching
- make sure pupils' progress and the quality of teaching are checked regularly and rigorously, and senior leaders follow up concerns more quickly.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We walked around the classrooms on both sites and I evaluated the schools' improvement plan. I looked at a range of documents that you provided for me which included minutes of governing body meetings, checks on pupils' progress, information about how staff performance is managed and notes of visits from the local authority adviser.

Context

Since the previous inspection, there have been some changes to staffing. Currently, the deputy headteacher is teaching full time in Year 6. A new Chair of Governors has been in place since February 2014. The governing body has also appointed a new clerk.

Main findings

Following the section 5 inspection, you, and your senior leadership team have drawn up a detailed action plan which covers all the areas identified for improvement. The plan sets out an adequate agenda for improvement, but the actions lack clear milestones and success criteria by which leaders and governors can measure the improvements that are being made and hold staff accountable for improving pupils' progress quickly.

The impact of the changes you have made is not yet seen in all classrooms. Discussions with you, the deputy headteacher and the local authority representative indicate concerns regarding the quality of teaching and the rate of pupil progress in a number of classes, particularly in lower Key Stage 2. School assessment information indicates that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 are likely to remain below the national average in 2014. The school's procedures for checking pupils' progress and monitoring the quality of teaching are in place, although at the time of this inspection only 14 lesson observations had taken place since the section 5 inspection. Senior leaders and teachers regularly meet to discuss the progress of pupils, but concerns about pupils' achievement are not followed up quickly enough. The schools most recent assessment information shows that there are still too many pupils in the school that are not making enough progress.

The newly appointed interim Chair of the Governing Body is very experienced. She is clear about the improvements which are necessary and has a good understanding of the importance of the governors' role in challenging and supporting school leaders in order to drive improvement. The governing body is providing a greater level of

challenge then in the recent past. This is because local authority training has enabled them to gain a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Members of the newly formed 'School Monitoring Board' are meeting each half term to discuss the progress of pupils. Board members are asking the right questions and requesting relevant and timely information.

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

Senior leaders have received appropriate guidance from the local authority advisor and a national leader in education. This has helped senior leaders accurately identify the actions that need to be taken to help the school improve. Governors have also benefited from training. Governors are beginning to ask searching questions. The local authority adviser has raised concerns with senior leaders about pace of change in moving the school to good.

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

Yours sincerely

Kekshan Salaria

Her Majesty's Inspector