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Richard Blofeld  
Headteacher  
Robert Sandilands Primary School and Nursery  
Digby Road  
Speen  
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Dear Mr Blofeld

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Robert Sandilands Primary School and Nursery**

Following my visit to your school on 14 May 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 February 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 leaders' lesson observations more clearly analyse the impact of teaching on the progress pupils make, in particular groups of pupils who are more vulnerable to underachievement
- strengthen the way in which pupils respond to their teachers' feedback, so that pupils use comments in a meaningful way to improve their work
- clarify the role of governors in checking the progress the school is making.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated a range of documentation including the school action plan, information relating to the monitoring of teaching and information about the progress pupils are making. You took me on a tour of the school and we made brief visits to all classes where I spoke to pupils about their work and looked at their books.

## **Main findings**

You and your senior leaders are taking a more analytical approach to look at information about how well pupils are doing. You are identifying where there are gaps in individual pupils' progress and then providing targeted support to help these pupils. Additionally you are using this information about pupils' progress to decide which teachers will teach each class next year, so that teachers' skills and expertise closely match the learning needs of pupils. You are communicating with parents quickly when their child is not making the progress they should. As a result parents are kept informed of what actions are being taken and are involved in finding ways to support their child.

Teachers are fine-tuning their planning so that they are better able to meet the needs of different groups of children. For example, during our visits to classrooms, we saw a range of resources and activities being used effectively in a Year 2 mathematics lesson to teach children how to use money.

You have reviewed and revised your marking policy and set clear expectations for the feedback pupils receive. Pupils' books show they are frequently given detailed guidance for their next steps in learning. As a result, pupils talk articulately about what they need to do to improve. However, inconsistencies remain about how and when pupils meaningfully respond to this feedback in their work.

You are using a range of information to judge the quality of teaching across the school, including lesson observations and talking to pupils. Teachers receive useful feedback from these observations, but there is too little evaluation of the impact of teaching on the progress pupils make, in particular groups of pupils who are more at risk of underachievement, for example those pupils who receive free school meals.

The school improvement plan focuses on the key areas for improvement. It sets out specific long- and short-term targets and measures for how the school will know when it has been successful. However, the plan does not show how the governors will check the progress the school is making.

Governors have a good understanding of the position of the school and the actions that need to be taken for it to improve. The governing body has recently undergone a review led by a local authority advisor and it is currently formulating an action plan in response to the findings. Useful training is planned to strengthen the governors' understanding of assessment 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**

The local authority has a clear understanding of the strengths of the school as well as the challenges it faces. A local authority advisor has provided good advice for writing and refining the school improvement plan. Senior leaders have benefited from carrying out joint lesson observations with local authority advisors which have confirmed leaders' understanding of the features of good and outstanding teaching. The governing body continues to benefit from useful support and training from the local authority's governor services advisor who has helped to identify its strengths and areas for development.

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

Yours sincerely

Lisa Moore

**Her Majesty's Inspector**