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Sharon Milner
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Milner

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Edith Weston Primary School

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 my 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.

This 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:

- arrange for an external review of governance to consider the makeup and functioning of the governing body
- indicate in the school improvement plan, precisely who will evaluate progress at key points and how they will report this to the governing body.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and the school leader, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan and leaders' procedures for checking on the quality of teaching were evaluated. I also toured the school to see classes at work.

Context

Since September 2013, the school has been in partnership with Brook Hill primary school, which is judged as 'outstanding' by Ofsted. The headteacher from Brooke Hill Academy has taken on the role of executive headteacher of both schools, and the school leader at Edith Weston is a former member of Brooke Hill's leadership team. The respective governing bodies have made a 'soft federation'. Because of changes in the deployment of service families, there is currently a particularly high turnover of pupils. Pupil numbers will fall in the coming few months, but should then rise again as new families move to the local base. Ministry of Defence funding will help to protect the school staffing during this transition period.

Main findings

The partnership with Brooke Hill primary academy has made a substantial impact on Edith Weston school. The executive headteacher and the school leader provide strong and resolute leadership, establishing clear policies and routines, raising the aspirations and expectations of the staff and modelling typically good and outstanding practice. Their dynamism and expertise has galvanised the staff into a culture of improvement and helped to generate a range of new activities for children in the school. Leaders have a very clear understanding of the current strengths and weaknesses in teaching. They have taken suitable actions to bring about improvement.

Pupils recognise that there are now many more opportunities for sporting activities, trips and other enrichment activities. Agreed common policies on marking and planning, mean that there is much greater consistency in the quality of teaching. Regular checks enable leaders to provide further advice and guidance. Books are regularly marked with useful corrections and advice, but not all teachers are insisting pupils take enough care over the presentation of their work. Older pupils generally have a good idea of what they need to do to make good progress. The school is a calm and well behaved. Leaders have made the school much more welcoming to parents and families.

Despite these improvements, many pupils are not yet confident and enthusiastic learners; they require more time with consistent and supportive teaching. The school estimates that the results of pupils in year 6 this year will be a significant improvement on last year. All pupils should make expected progress and some will do better. Overall levels of attainment, however, will still be slightly below the national average.

The governing body is committed and hard-working. Having recognised that urgent action was required and taken the decision to link Edith Weston with Brooke Hill, governors are engaging well with the Brooke Hill governing body and the executive headteacher to improve their skills. Because some parent governors who are in the army have recently been posted, the governing body is currently under strength. For

this reason, and in order to review the ways in which the governing body organises its business in the federation, I have recommended that an external review is undertaken.

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, whilst initially slow to identify failings in the school, have been helpful in supporting the links with Brooke Hill and are making regular visits to the school to assist with checking on the quality of teaching. The school is making very good use of the links with Brooke Hill, including for the training of staff.

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

Yours sincerely

John Peckham
Her Majesty's Inspector