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6 June 2014

Craig Moxham  
Headteacher  
Cotgrave C of E Primary School  
The Cross  
Cotgrave  
NG12 3HS

Dear Mr Moxham

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Cotgrave C of E Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 5 June 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 March 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:

- increase the opportunities pupils have to respond to teachers' feedback on their work, including meeting extra challenges when appropriate
- amend the school improvement plan, so that it is reduced in size, lists the individuals responsible for monitoring and evaluating actions, and states milestones for success more clearly.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, three representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. You took me on a tour of the school and we visited each class.

## **Main findings**

You, your members of staff and your governors have responded very positively to your recent inspection. There is a collective will to ensure that the school provides a good quality of education, and school data show that impact is already being seen in better progress being made by pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1.

Teachers are setting higher expectations, and pupils are rising to the challenge. As headteacher, you are holding teachers to closer account for the progress of the children in their classes. You now expect individual teachers to produce plans of their own to address potential underachievement, instead of it being your responsibility.

You have refocused the way that the quality of teaching is judged in the school to ensure that the progress that pupils make over time is taken into account. It is too early to judge any impact of this change.

Teachers are matching work more closely to pupils' individual needs. In a mathematics lesson for 17 pupils in Years 4 to 6, five different activities were undertaken at the same time. This bespoke attention is resulting in improved progress. Two more-able Year 6 pupils have benefitted from more challenging work as they aim to achieve Level 6 in mathematics. In the same class, the teacher is rightly giving spelling a higher profile, both in regular writing activities and through pupils taking part in a spelling bee where children were given different lists of words based on their ability.

Teaching assistants have greater direct involvement in improving pupils' progress. This includes working directly with individuals and small groups, both in and out of the classroom, and with more able pupils as well as those of less ability. Those pupils who access this extra support make improved progress.

Marking, while carried out frequently, is still an area for development. This is because pupils are not given sufficient time to respond to the feedback teachers give them. Further, some pupils would benefit from being set an extra challenge through their teachers' feedback which builds on the progress already made.

Parents have been invited to a meeting later this month to discuss the progress the school is making, and a much shortened version of the school improvement plan has been prepared to share with them on this occasion. The teacher responsible for Reception and Year 1 has met with members of staff from the local SureStart centre to communicate how parents can make a positive contribution to ensuring their children are prepared for school. It is too early to judge the impact of this at present.

A huge amount of effort has gone into creating a detailed and comprehensive school development plan. However, it needs to be revised as a priority. This is because it is far too long, lacks clarity and is therefore not as effective as required.

Governors are committed to improving the school and they reacted swiftly to the findings of the recent inspection. A new Strategy and Standards Committee has been formed, with pupil progress as its main focus. Membership of all committees was revised following a skills audit. The structural changes have helped governors become clearer about their individual roles in school improvement. Governors contributed to the revised school improvement plan. One governor has attended training on effective performance management of school leaders; another has compiled a programme of training for his fellow governors which links directly to the improvement plan. While much training is planned, the programme has yet to begin and therefore no impact can be seen in this regard.

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**

Shortly after your inspection, a representative of the local authority visited the school to review your improvement plans, to offer advice on appointing staff, and to provide some guidance on headteacher appraisal. The advice on appointing staff has assisted the headteacher in his recruitment processes.

The local authority and the Diocese have been successful in brokering the support of an outstanding, local school, though it is too early to judge any impact at present.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian McNeilly  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**