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Mr Gerry Heaton
Headteacher
Hungerford Primary School
Fairview Road
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Berkshire
RG17 0BT

Dear Mr Heaton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hungerford Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 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 second 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.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, 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 was evaluated. In addition I looked at other school documents such as the local authority's pupil premium review and their latest note of visit. I scrutinised a wide range of pupils' books. With you, I visited classrooms, talked to pupils and watched pupils working outside.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, a new teacher has moved into Year 4, and the class structure for Year 6 has been changed to enable more whole class teaching. The assistant headteacher has left the school.

Main findings

Since the last monitoring inspection you have worked with rigour and determination to ensure a more rapid pace of change and improvement. With the support of the local authority you have focused keenly on improving teaching and learning. Effective training has been delivered to teachers in a range of areas and this has led to early improvements. These improvements have been strengthened through a sharper system of monitoring teaching, marking and pupils' progress by senior leaders. You have thus been able to identify and quickly address any areas of ongoing weakness.

You have focused intensively on the way in which teachers mark pupils' work and give them feedback for improvement. My scrutiny of pupils' books showed clear improvement in this area with examples of challenging feedback and good responses from pupils leading to their better progress and learning. You are aware of remaining inconsistencies and have plans to address these.

You have undertaken effective development work with teachers on using pupil progress data to understand better how to match work to pupils' abilities. This is starting to bear fruit. Expectations in classrooms are noticeably higher so work is becoming more challenging. As a result, pupils' behaviour in classrooms is more focused and they are interested in and engaged with their work. Teachers' assessment of work is more accurate, although there is still work to be done to ensure that this is consistent.

The rate at which pupils are making progress is speeding up, and is now good in some year groups. In Year 6, pupils are on track to achieve results in line with national expectations this summer, and are making better progress than previously due to intensively targeted support. More-able pupils in particular have made strong progress in reading and writing. In Year 5, pupils are progressing even more rapidly and are now achieving well. Nevertheless, not all pupils are yet making the progress they should.

A new chair has been elected to the governing body and this has injected the group with a much-improved rigour. Governors are part way through an external review and have undertaken a self-evaluation. A thorough understanding of the school's information on pupil progress is now matched with the confidence to challenge you

about the impact of your work. An external review of the pupil premium funding has been undertaken by the local authority and an appropriate action plan written in response. This details sensible actions to address weaker achievement where it occurs; you have secured additional teaching time next term to support these pupils.

The school's action plan has been rewritten and is now better focused with clear criteria for success. You have clearly identified what the impact of your actions will be, and they are more effectively prioritised.

You have appointed new leaders for mathematics and literacy. Significant training has been provided in these subjects for all staff and the new leaders by the local authority; this is already raising standards in these subjects. Further training on the analysis of pupil progress data analysis and evaluation will be given next term to empower these leaders to drive up expectations and standards still further.

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's support for you and the school is strong and well-directed. Appropriate levels of training and resources have been provided and the school has benefited from high levels of challenge and monitoring from the school improvement partner. Some useful visits to other schools have been undertaken; more would be productive so that teachers can see as much good and outstanding teaching as possible.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Anwar
Her Majesty's Inspector