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10 June 2014

Mrs Clare Whitaker  
Bowsland Green Primary School  
Ellicks Close  
Bradley Stoke  
Bristol  
BS32 0ES

Dear Mrs Whitaker

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bowsland Green 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 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, governors and the local authority are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- act upon the advice given by the local authority to make rapid improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage provision.
- ensure that there is a consistent approach to handwriting so that improvements in pupils' presentation skills can be accelerated.
- use the findings of the upcoming external review of the governing body to quickly develop governor's ability to challenge the performance of the school.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, a representative from the local authority and three members of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken from the last inspection. I also spoke with your school improvement adviser, a group of teachers and some pupils about the changes which had taken place since the inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated and the findings of two recent local authority reviews were considered.

## **Context**

Since the section 5 inspection the deputy head has returned from maternity leave. A teacher has been appointed on a temporary contract to cover another maternity leave.

## **Main findings**

Senior leaders have implemented a more rigorous system to monitor and measure the impact of teaching on pupil progress. This is enabling them to have a greater understanding of the gaps in achievement and to plan ways to support those pupils who are not doing as well as they should. It is also highlighting those classes where teachers require support to improve their teaching.

There has been improvement in the way that pupils present their work. This is because teachers are developing higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. The presentation in the pupils' numeracy books has improved significantly. By launching a campaign where neat work is rewarded and celebrated, pupils are gaining a better understanding of what good quality work looks like. Most teachers have embraced the higher standards expected of them and are working hard to put into place the agreed principles for high quality teaching. However, these are yet to fully embed into all parts of the school. For example, the new marking policy is having a positive impact on pupil progress but it is not used as well as it could be by all teachers. Although there are examples of books that are marked well, this is not a consistent feature of teaching.

A review of the Early Years Foundation Stage has reduced the excessive amount of time spent on developing reading skills in these classes. This review highlights that provision for the youngest children does not always challenge and motivate them sufficiently well. By auditing the resources available to the Reception children, a need for equipment more suitable for this age range has been identified.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium has taken place and senior leaders have received training in the use of this fund. As a consequence, a policy has been developed and a member of the governing body has been appointed as a link governor to oversee the use of pupil premium. Teachers now have a greater knowledge of those pupils who are entitled to this funding. They track the

achievement that these pupils make and are accountable to key stage leaders for the amount of individual progress being made. Pupils in receipt of extra funding have eight hours additional support from teaching assistants. During these group sessions key skills already taught in class lessons are reinforced and preparations for future sessions help to build the pupils confidence.

Senior leaders, including governors, now have a clearer understanding of their part to play in the improvement journey of this school. A small proportion of roles have been reallocated to enable those with the most appropriate skills to lead on a subject or area of responsibility. Teacher performance is being carefully tracked and support put into place for those staff whose teaching requires improvement. As a result of coaching and support, some staff have improved their teaching skills. However, others have not and this remains a concern.

Due to unforeseen circumstances the external review of governance was not able to take place as planned but is due to take place in the very near future. Meanwhile, an external consultant has helped them gain a clearer picture of their roles and responsibilities.

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 provides considerable support for the school. They have recently completed a school review which reported positively on a number of key improvements. Reviewers indicated that school leaders have the capacity to lead the improvements required. The headteacher has been allocated a local headteacher to work with. This is starting to influence practice and encourage deeper reflection. The improvement adviser has been working closely with the English subject leader to improve standards in writing. Visit notes show that despite some improvement in the way that pupils present their work, the school needs to do more to improve the quality of pupils' handwriting. Following a review of the Early Years Foundation Stage, a local authority advisory teacher has been working with teaching staff to improve provision. Classrooms are now set out better to support children's learning and staff are engaged in developing their teaching. Nevertheless, there is still some way to go before these changes rapidly improve pupils' progress. Mentors have been very recently organised for the literacy and numeracy leaders and the Chair of Governors to work with. It is too early to see the impact of this work.

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

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**