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David Fotheringham
Headteacher
Gamston CofE (Aided) Primary School
Stanboard Lane
Gamston
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Dear Mr Fotheringham

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Gamston CofE (Aided) Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, members of the governing body, and representatives of the local authority and the diocese to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I toured the school, visited all classrooms and held discussions with some pupils. I evaluated the school's post-inspection action plan. I looked also at the school's latest data on the progress of the pupils, some of the Reception-Year children's 'learning journeys', reports by an external consultant on the work of the teaching assistants, and read a letter from a parent sent to the school for my attention.

Main findings

You began quickly working on the areas for improvement from the inspection. Your approach to making the necessary improvements has been thoughtful, considered and systematic. You have identified suitable initiatives for improving the pupils' achievement in writing and in mathematics and have begun the staff development needed to enable the proper introduction of those initiatives at the start of next academic year.

You have already reorganised the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). As a result, you have seen notable improvements in the pupils' understanding and application of phonics, compared with last year.

You and the senior leaders at the school are looking more closely at the quality of the teachers' planning and at how the teachers mark the pupils' work. There are signs that this is leading to better practice. The pupils are getting more opportunities to write in different subjects and for a range of purposes.

The pupils with whom I spoke talked enthusiastically about the broader range of opportunities to write. They spoke also about getting more opportunities to respond to the teachers' marking. Your data suggest that the improvements in teaching are leading to the pupils making more progress than previously.

It was evident, however, that not all of the pupils understood the teachers' comments and how to respond to them. It was apparent also that the work that the pupils are given is not yet routinely challenging the most able as much as it might.

Reports by a consultant working with the school show recent improvement in the extent to which teaching assistants are engaged actively in promoting the pupils' learning. I saw examples of teaching assistants working closely with pupils when I visited the classrooms.

You have re-defined the role of subject leaders, so that it is clearer what they are expected to do, with particular regard to the areas for improvement at the school. Similarly, the governing body is changing the responsibilities of individual members, so that it will also be better equipped to monitor the school's progress.

Members of the governing body are well informed and knowledgeable about the work of the school. As a result, they have been able to work productively with the senior leaders and ensured that the school's post-inspection improvement plan is fit for purpose. The plan does not, however, indicate sufficiently how the pupils' achievement will be improved by the actions it proposes, or how the school will measure its progress.

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 school has access to a good range of suitable external support. It is working productively with its partners, including the local authority. The local authority has helped to organise a partnership for the school with another, outstanding school. Importantly, you have at the same time taken the initiative, identified and begun working with other partners and networks to assist with developments at Gamston CofE Primary.

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

Yours sincerely

**Her Majesty's Inspector
Clive Moss**