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Jamie White
Oulton Broad Primary School
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NR32 3JX

Dear Mr White

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Oulton Broad 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 December 2013. 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 following the section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- identify in its action plan clearly measurable success criteria and show how and when governors, pupils, parents and carers have a specific role in reaching different milestones
- ensure that the school's focus on challenging the most able, gifted and talented pupils is consistent across classes and subjects
- give further consideration to subject leadership across a wider range of curriculum areas.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, the literacy and mathematics leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a group of pupils from different classes. I discussed the school's progress with a representative of the local authority. I evaluated the school action and improvement plans, reviewed monitoring records, and visited classes to see pupils and staff at work.

Context

Since the Section 5 inspection one teacher has left the school. A new literacy leader has joined the school.

Main findings

You have raised expectations of pupils. All teaching staff have visited a high achieving school in London where pupils' starting points are low and their circumstances are challenging. The actions taken by staff since the visits have contributed to higher standards of pupils' work and predicted test results.

Considerable redecoration of the school has helped to improve the learning environment for pupils. You have started to equip classrooms with better computer resources. Clearer and higher expectations of teaching are evident in teachers' whiteboard work and written feedback which follows the school's handwriting policy. Improvements in the quality of pupils' writing, including presentation, show that they are inspired by the examples of good writing provided. Pupils are clearly informed about what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve further.

Teaching is improving because more regular and rigorous monitoring and evaluation are taking place. Joint activities with two local headteachers and the local authority adviser have contributed to your growing confidence, and that of the deputy headteacher, in judging the quality of teaching. You are using a wider range of evidence, including work scrutiny, pupil progress meetings and focussed lesson observations, to ensure that raising standards remains a high priority. You have started to use coaching to sustain improvements in teaching.

Our visits to classrooms indicated that pupils are benefitting from a wider range of strategies designed to meet their diverse needs and interests. Supporting this is more effective deployment of teaching assistants. The training provided for teaching assistants, the observations made and feedback given to them, have helped to intensify their support for pupils. Gaps between the achievement of pupils that require additional support and their peers are narrowing as a consequence. Teaching assistants value the professional development they are receiving which was previously limited to teaching staff.

Staff are actively involved in analysing progress data for their class, including the differing rates of progress made by girls and boys, pupils eligible for additional pupil premium funding and more advantaged pupils. This is contributing to improvement planning. For example, the faster progress of girls in mathematics has led to plans for more active and competitive approaches to engage boys. Some classes we visited were clearly set additional challenges for pupils who finished quickly and accurately. However, provision for the most able pupils is an area of inconsistency. Discussion with pupils indicated that knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses is limited to mostly English and mathematics. There is not enough awareness of, or provision for, pupils who are gifted and talented in different subjects. Specialist sports coaching to promote pupils' physical development and participation in competitive sport show what is possible; pupils' achievement in sport is improving rapidly. The leadership of aspects or subjects of the National Curriculum is generally

an area for further consideration, for example in order to develop a more coherent approach to provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Most parents and carers actively support the school's improvement, for example by participating in a handwriting workshop so they can help their children practice at home. However, a very small proportion of parents have used Parent View to report their views about the school.

A weakness of the school's action plan is that the role of parents and carers, pupils and governors is not identified as especially significant at key points in the school's timetable to 'get to good'. The lack of specific, measurable success criteria also limits the usefulness of the action plan. The improvement plan that existed prior to the inspection is a better example of senior leaders' planning.

Following an external review of governance the Governing Body are better aligned to the school's priorities for improvement. Governors' visits to the school are recorded more systematically and show that the level of challenge has risen. There are sound plans to recruit additional governors who have the expertise to help address particular improvements. There is limited use by governors of Ofsted's survey reports to inform the school's strategy to 'get to good'. For example, reports about effective governance, best practice in the use of pupil premium funding or recommendations about improving particular subjects contain further information to help governors support the school's improvement.

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 is providing effective support through professional development for senior leaders and staff. This includes in-school training in lesson observation and moderating assessments of pupils' work. Specific support has been received in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Mathematics support has been through staff attendance on courses and additional in-school training in mathematics is planned. A review of provision for pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is scheduled.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Middleton
Her Majesty's Inspector