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Janice Butterworth
Headteacher
Parnwell Primary School
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Peterborough
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Dear Ms Butterworth

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Parnwell Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 September 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 May 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:

- amend the school development plan so that:
 - it is aligned to phase and subjects plans
 - the contribution of learning support assistants to improving teaching, learning and assessment is more clearly identified

- develop links with children's centres and other pre-school settings to support families and ensure that all children, particularly the most disadvantaged, are well prepared for school.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, subjects and phase leaders and four learning support assistants. I met the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body. I also met with a representative of the local authority.

During the visit, you joined me and the deputy headteacher on a tour of the school. I spoke with pupils informally and looked at their work. I scrutinised the school development plan and the new assessment and feedback policy. I checked the single central record for newly appointed staff.

Context

Following the planned retirement of the headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher acted as headteacher till the end of the summer term. You took up post as substantive headteacher of Parnwell Primary School at the beginning of this academic year. Two class teachers left in July and two teachers are new to the school, including the subject leader for computing. Two teachers, one of whom is the special educational needs coordinator, have now returned from maternity leave.

Main findings

You are responding very promptly and positively to the last inspection. You are determined to improve quickly the outcomes for all groups of pupils. The deputy headteacher and other leaders show the same determination and are taking the necessary actions to improve achievement in their areas of responsibility, particularly in mathematics and reading.

The school development plan is rightly focused on accelerating pupils' progress and improving the quality of teaching and assessment. This plan, however, requires updating because whole school actions do not tightly match those of subject plans. For example, some subject plans clearly show how learning support assistants will contribute to improving learning and assessment in a particular subject, but this is not then linked to whole school priorities and to training opportunities.

Subject leaders in mathematics and English are improving their understanding of data. The training they are receiving is increasing their confidence in tracking the progress of different groups of pupils more carefully. Subject leaders are now given time to work with colleagues to improve the teaching of their subject and to plan interventions to support pupils who are falling behind. The teaching of guided reading, for example, is much improved. Although there is still some way to go, particularly for more able learners, pupils are beginning to make more rapid progress.

The new assessment and feedback policy is very recent but it is already being implemented to good effect. Pupils said that they understand how teachers mark their work and they explained to me that they *'must make sure they read the orange marking to improve what they have done.'* Pupils' books showed that they are responding accurately to teachers' corrections.

As a new headteacher you quickly galvanised the staff's commitment and trust. You make your high expectations clear. Staff particularly value the time you are spending with them during their one-to-one sessions. You are yet to meet colleagues from other local schools but you are aware of the range of networks available through the school-to-school partnership and the Peterborough Learning Partnership.

During the summer term, the deputy headteacher in her role as the acting headteacher promptly reviewed the responsibilities of senior staff, clarified job descriptions and ensured that good teaching practice was shared among staff. It is still too early to see whether the quality of teaching is improving consistently but teachers plan more carefully for the different abilities in their class, learning support assistants are clear about what they need to do, classrooms are well organised and resources are much improved, particularly to support the teaching of computing. The new specialist teacher knows what needs to be done and staff training is in hand.

You invited parents to meet you as soon as you started as headteacher of the school and the 'meet and greet' coffee morning was particularly successful. You are taking a rigorous approach to challenging pupils' absence through increased contact with families, although there is still more work to do with the Traveller community. There are currently insufficient links with children's centres and other pre-school settings to support families and improve children's good levels of development on entry to school.

Governors continue to develop their knowledge and expertise. They provide support and challenge as reported in the previous inspection. When reviewing the effectiveness of their decisions, governors acknowledge that they need to check in more detail the impact of their above-average spending on staff providing additional support.

External support

The local authority improvement and subject advisers provide good support to the school working alongside senior and subject leaders to improve their monitoring and evaluation skills. This external support has been particularly effective in developing the new leadership team and moderating the accuracy of teachers' assessment. Facilitated by the local authority, teachers also observe good or outstanding practice in other schools. The positive impact of this work is leading to significant improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching good levels of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

Yours sincerely

Marianick Ellender-Gelé
Her Majesty's Inspector