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Mrs Gill Denham
The Headteacher
Marish Primary School
Swabey Road
Langley
Slough
SL3 8NZ

Dear Mrs Denham

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Marish Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 11 September 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in May 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteachers and middle leaders. I also met a group of pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body, who is also the Chair of the Board of Trustees of Marish Academy Trust. A tour of the school to observe pupils at work in classrooms was undertaken and I looked at a range of school documents. The academy proprietor's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, there have been several staff changes. The leadership team has been strengthened and new middle leaders have been appointed. Four newly qualified teachers and three unqualified teachers, who are taking an employment-based training route to qualified teacher status, have joined the school. For the first time in four years, the school is fully staffed with permanent

appointments. As the executive headteacher you are now based at the school full time, having been almost full time at the other school in the trust during the previous year.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You have responded to the inspection judgements with determination and energy to improve. This positive approach has already galvanised the new senior leadership team and is beginning to make a difference. Members of the school community are aware of the journey ahead and the challenges they face. You have kept parents informed so that they also understand how you intend to improve the school. The school improvement plan is logically sequenced, detailed and ambitious. Appropriate priorities have been set. Targets for improving the quality of teaching are sufficiently challenging and realistic, given the significant changes to staffing and the relative inexperience of some teachers.

The focus on strengthening leadership is appropriate. Work has been carried out to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of school leaders. As a result they know what they will be held accountable for. Training for leaders, provided by external consultants, has improved their understanding of school performance data. Further work to train the wider staff team is planned over the next few months.

Work is underway to improve the curriculum and make learning more interesting. Leaders have plans to improve teaching through a whole-school coaching programme; but, as yet, few tailored support plans for individual teachers are in place. Behaviour observed during my visits to classrooms was more settled. The pupils I met were keen to share their thoughts about the new behaviour system and spoke positively about its introduction.

The statement of action provided by the academy proprietor is not fit for purpose. This is because the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's progress are not robust enough. The Chair of the Board of Trustees and Governors for the school monitors the governing body and also leads the strategic action group which evaluates the school's progress. This represents a potential conflict of interest. The trustees have commissioned a wide variety of external consultants to help the school, but have not required them to provide any reports on their work. It is therefore not possible for the trustees to judge whether their support is making a difference or providing value for money.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The proprietor's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Slough and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alexandra Butler
Associate Inspector