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Martyn Payne
Headteacher
Pakefield Primary School
London Road
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Lowestoft
NR33 7AQ

Dear Mr Payne

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Pakefield Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 29 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 June 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:

- strengthen its action plan by ensuring that a responsible person is identified for each action and that it is made clear when each action will be monitored, by whom and how you will know whether you have been successful
- increase the impact of marking by ensuring that teachers provide an opportunity for pupils to reflect on and respond to what has been written at the beginning of every lesson.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, your two deputy headteachers and with four members of the governing body to discuss the action taken since the

last inspection. I spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone. The school development and action plans were evaluated and you took me on a tour of the school. You shared with me the results of this year's Key Stage 2 national tests.

Context

Two teachers left the school at the end of the academic year. Three teachers joined in September, two of whom are newly qualified and one who is a specialist mathematics teacher. An ICT technician, a clerk to the governing body and one new governor have also joined the school.

Main findings

The proportion of pupils who attained at least the expected Level 4 in the Key Stage 2 tests improved this year, and was in line with the national average in all areas, having been well below average in 2013. The school's own data show that the proportion of pupils who made at least the expected amount of progress was in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.

The school's action plan is detailed and thorough and includes all the improvement points from the last inspection. The timeline at the front of the plan gives a useful overview of the actions planned throughout the year. The milestones and deadlines that you have set are realistic and achievable. You have sensibly chosen to focus on improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement in mathematics as your first priorities.

To improve the plan, you now need to ensure that a named person has responsibility for ensuring that each action is carried out. Dates need to be set for monitoring activities to take place and the plan needs to state who has responsibility for this and how the school will know whether the actions has been successful.

The quality of teaching is improving as a result of intensive packages of support for individuals as well as training and development opportunities for all staff. You have set realistic targets for all teaching to be good or better and you are monitoring teachers' planning and the work in pupils' books, as well as observing lessons, to check progress towards these goals.

On my tour of the school, I saw evidence that the new marking system is being implemented. Although teachers are conscientious in following the policy, it is not yet having as much impact as it could. This is because comments are not always sharply focused on giving pupils advice on how to improve their work and because pupils are not routinely given the opportunity to respond to their teachers' comments.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is improving and there is increased clarity of roles. Your two deputies are now involved fully in all aspects of leading the school. Literacy and mathematics leadership teams are now in place and are focused on school improvement. Other leadership roles have been adjusted to take advantage of teachers' strengths. Your clear vision and enthusiasm are effective in bringing people with you on the journey to becoming a good or better school.

Governors are now better able to hold the school to account because you provide them with useful and timely information and are transparent in your discussions with them. Governors have received training on the use of assessment data and have introduced a new system to ensure that all governors are able to ask challenging questions during meetings.

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

A 'challenge partner', commissioned by the local authority, provides useful support to the school and this is a relationship that you value. The local authority has provided support from a literacy advisor but the same resource has not been made available for mathematics. The support provided by the local authority has been remiss because you were not provided with a mentor when you took up your post, even though this is your first headship, and have had to rely on your own personal support networks.

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

Yours sincerely

Wendy Varney
Her Majesty's Inspector