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Mary Nicholls
Headteacher
Stanley Drapkin Primary School, Steeple Bumpstead
Bower Hall Drive
Steeple Bumpstead
Haverhill
CB9 7ED

Dear Mrs Nicholls

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Stanley Drapkin Primary School, Steeple Bumpstead

Following my visit to your school on 15 October 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:

- ensure that all written feedback to pupils contains sufficient challenge, particularly for the more able
- ensure that planned additional support for pupils in mathematics starts as quickly as possible.

Evidence

During this inspection I undertook short visits to classes with you and we examined pupils' work in four classes. I met with you, your deputy headteacher, middle leaders, a representative of the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor. I evaluated the school's improvement plans, examined the single central record of staff and a range of other documentation relating to the school's performance since the last inspection.

Context

Since the last inspection the deputy headteacher has returned from a secondment. The special educational needs coordinator has retired, and an existing member of staff has been appointed to this position. A newly qualified teacher has been appointed to teach in Year 4. Three parent governors and a community governor have joined the governing body.

Main findings

The school's improvement plans are thorough and relevant. They address all the areas identified in the recent section 5 inspection. Appropriate milestones have been set out for each target. It is clear who is responsible for overseeing each part of the plan and who will monitor and evaluate progress.

You have acted quickly to agree with all teachers a set of basic expectations for every lesson. As a result, teachers now ensure that the presentation of pupils' work is consistently of a good standard. Teachers are planning more systematically for the needs of pupils of all abilities within their classes. They are beginning to use more engaging questioning techniques in the classroom and they are monitoring the understanding of individual pupils more effectively. Teaching assistants are now being deployed in a way which is more effectively aligned with the needs of individual pupils.

Your clear expectations about written feedback to help improve pupils' work have ensured that marking is regular and thorough. Teachers strive to provide feedback which encourages a response from the pupils themselves and pupils are developing the habit of responding to this feedback. However, some teachers do not always ensure that their feedback contains a sufficient element of challenge, particularly for the more able.

You have started to oversee changes which will improve achievement in mathematics. You have clarified leadership and management responsibilities. Steps have been taken to raise the profile of mathematics amongst parents, for example by providing increased opportunities for on-line home learning. Teachers are working

hard to incorporate more problem-solving approaches into lessons and specific mental mathematics sessions have been adopted. The school has identified those pupils who would benefit from further support in mathematics although this support has not yet started.

A local authority report on how the school uses its pupil premium funding has helped the governing body to better understand its responsibilities for monitoring both the school's provision for disadvantaged pupils and the progress they make. Governors are entirely committed to working with school leaders to ensure the school becomes good or better as quickly as possible. The external review of governance recommended in the section 5 inspection is scheduled for November 2014.

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 received prompt and effective support from the local authority. A representative from the local authority will continue to visit the school to monitor progress every half-term. The school has commissioned additional support from a local authority mathematics adviser.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Lawrence
Associate Inspector