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22 October 2014

Miss Tracey Oram  
Headteacher  
Tiptree Heath Primary School  
103 Maldon Road  
Tiptree  
Colchester  
CO5 0PG

Dear Miss Oram

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Tiptree Heath Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 21 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 second 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 identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- make sure that teachers check pupils' work when marking it, to ensure that the planning for future lessons is pitched at the right level for all abilities
- strengthen the achievement in mathematics to match the achievement found in reading and writing.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and the leader of the review team contracted by the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated and assessment information reviewed. A number of short visits to lessons in all classes were undertaken where we looked at pupils' books and talked to them informally.

## **Context**

Since my last visit in February, two teachers have left the school and a newly qualified teacher started teaching in September 2014. During this monitoring inspection the local authority was carrying out a review of teaching and learning.

## **Main findings**

Assessment information shows that you and your teaching team have improved achievement in reading and writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage, in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils making the expected, and exceeding the expected, progress have increased. In mathematics, standards in Key Stage 2 have declined a bit and the proportion of pupils making the expected progress have not increased as much as in the other two subjects. Nevertheless, the overall picture is one of better achievement than in 2013.

One reason why achievement in mathematics is not as strong is because there is not enough emphasis on teaching pupils systematic problem solving which would help to develop their fluency with numbers and their reasoning skills.

There is effective teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In Key Stages 1 and 2 you have successfully led improvements in teaching, particularly in writing and reading. The work undertaken to improve pupils' attitudes to learning when working in groups is effective: they work hard, are attentive when listening to each other and are resilient when tackling problems.

The guidance teachers give pupils in their books is more helpful than at the last monitoring inspection, but teachers do not use this knowledge well enough when planning lessons for all abilities in a class. Some pupils were observed struggling with work that was too hard for them and some questioning by teachers is too undemanding for the most able pupils.

Governance is more effective than at the time of the last monitoring inspection. The school improvement plan is now a useful management tool used by you and the governors to map out school improvement initiatives. Well trained governors now demonstrate a good understanding of their strategic role. Their work is focussed on making sure that the changes made by you are having the desired impact on getting the school to good.

**External support**

There is a productive relationship with the local authority. They have provided training across the school to develop the quality of teaching, which has been particularly effective in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The review of governance this term gave governors some useful advice on improvements to be made. Regular visits by local authority advisers have helped to keep a check on school improvement and to hold you to account for the progress made.

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

Tim Bristow

**Her Majesty's Inspector**