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14 October 2014

Tony Chapman  
Mattishall Primary School  
Dereham Road  
Mattishall  
Dereham  
NR20 3AA

Dear Mr Chapman

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Mattishall Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 13 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 section 5 inspection in July 2014.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement. 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:

- identify in its action plan clearly measurable success criteria, showing how your targets relate to the standards reached nationally by different groups of pupils
- apply your improvements in providing feedback and marking in English to other subjects, including mathematics
- engage staff, governors, pupils and their parents in evaluating the school's progress
- make use of Ofsted's resources, for example, case studies of good practice and surveys of outstanding schools.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher with responsibility for English, the teacher with responsibility for physical education and two governors. I held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local

authority. I evaluated the school's action plan and reviewed monitoring records. I visited classes to see pupils and staff at work.

### **Context**

Since the Section 5 inspection there have been no changes in staffing.

### **Main findings**

Since the previous inspection, you have:

- written an action plan to address the areas requiring improvement
- informed parents about the school's actions to promote improvement
- commissioned an external review of governance
- reorganised staff in order to spread the most effective teaching
- reviewed, as a school, the quality of marking in pupils' books
- introduced topic books to promote better writing across different subjects.

The high priority you are giving to writing is evident in pupils' books and the high quality displays throughout the school. The successful impact of your focus on reading, supported by the transformation of a mobile classroom into a stunning library, provides a secure basis for improvement. Apart from reading books, staff are using a wide range of exciting ideas to stimulate pupils' interest in writing. These include the use of fascinating artefacts, a visiting author and illustrator, visits and residential experiences. Pupils are writing more often and at length. The quality of what pupils write is supported by better marking. Staff routinely check pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils are responding by making corrections before moving onto the next challenge. The additional feedback given by the staff who mark pupils' responses is helping to improve accuracy.

Good quality marking does not extend to all subjects, particularly mathematics. This limits the development of pupils' key skills, including literacy, in the context of different subjects. Following the introduction of the new National Curriculum you have started to bring together in topic books work from different subjects related to a common theme. However, not all subject leaders have prepared sufficiently for the new National Curriculum and assessment to ensure that topics promote progression in pupils' learning. An exception is physical education where the subject leader is promoting the interest of pupils and commitment of staff to curriculum development. Staff training, followed by structured observations of PE teaching, provides a strong example for other subjects to follow.

Your action plan is supported by complementary subject plans. Some subject plans, for example English, contain targets that are sufficiently detailed to know when improvements are on track. However, while your overall plan has proven adequate in getting improvements started, the success criteria are not detailed enough to monitor further progress. For example, your written plans to improve teaching do not show which aspects of teaching are currently stronger or weaker. Visits to classes supported your judgement that teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 remains a strength of provision: these younger pupils are

particularly clear about the objectives for their learning. These existing strengths should be shared more widely. The evaluation of your action plan is at an early stage. It is not clear how you will fully involve staff, pupils, parents and governors in order to realise your aim to 'get the school to good' within a year.

You value the support of the 16 other schools in your working cluster. This includes two secondary schools which most of your pupils join. You are using these links judiciously, for example, by involving a secondary English specialist in moderating your assessments of Year 6 work. You also have sound plans to visit schools further afield, to ensure that your expectations are suitably high and match good practice nationally. However, your action plan does not show how your targets relate to the standards reached nationally by different groups of pupils.

Governors contribute to the school's plans for improvement and understand their role in challenging the school to improve quickly. However, while governors meet and visit the school regularly their view of the school relies on a limited range of first-hand evidence. Governors plan to use the forthcoming external review of governance to seek examples of good practice in governance. They have not as yet taken account of Ofsted's good practice reports to inform their work.

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**

Since the school was judged to require improvement contact with the local authority has increased. The school is enrolled on the 'Norfolk to Good and Great' school improvement initiative. Visits by the school improvement adviser are planned to focus on moderating the school's judgements about the quality of teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Middleton

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy