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Mr Mark Alston
Headteacher
Holme-upon-Spalding Moor Primary School
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Holme-upon-Spalding Moor
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Dear Mr Alston

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Holme-upon-Spalding Moor Primary School

Following my visit with Belita Scott, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 2 December 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in February 2014. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children, Family and Schools for East Riding of Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Lee Owston

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2014

- Increase the proportion of good teaching in order that pupils achieve well in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in reading and mathematics
 - making sure that work set is at the right level of challenge for all pupils, especially the most-able
 - ensuring that pupils have enough opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to problem-solving activities
 - ensuring that teachers' marking and feedback informs pupils of how they can improve their work and that time is given for them to respond to the teachers' comments.

- Ensure that all leaders including governors are more effective in driving up standards and improving rates of progress by:
 - ensuring leaders at all levels in the school gain a more accurate view of the school's performance
 - developing the role of subject leaders in checking the quality of teaching so they can become more effective in raising pupils' achievement
 - developing further the systems for tracking pupils' progress so that leaders are better able to check how well pupils are doing and are clear as to the progress made by pupils in all year groups and subjects
 - ensuring governors are better informed of the school's performance so that they can successfully challenge leaders and teachers more rigorously and hold them to account for raising achievement.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 2 December 2014

Evidence

Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders and those responsible for English and mathematics. They also spoke to a member of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors observed the quality of teaching in classrooms, spoke informally to pupils about their learning and reviewed the current standard of work in pupils' books. The headteacher accompanied inspectors on visits to two classrooms. Inspectors also looked at a range of information, including reviews of the post-Ofsted action plan, information about pupils' achievements across the school, records relating to the quality of teaching and the minutes from recent governing body meetings.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection, a part-time teacher has been recruited to teach English and mathematics to an additional Year 3 and Year 4 class every morning. A teaching assistant to support those with special educational needs has also been appointed. The governing body has been reconstituted. Three governors with educational expertise have recently joined to replace those who have left; one vacancy remains to be filled.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Leaders have been quick to address the concerns raised during the February inspection and improve the fundamental systems and processes for checking on the work of the school. Changes to the tracking of pupils' progress, in particular, now enable closer analysis across subjects and pupil groups so that at the end of each term there is a clear picture of what is working well and where further improvement is needed. This is allowing senior leaders to have an increasingly accurate view of the school's overall performance. More frequent analysis, as the term progresses, would allow an even swifter response to the remaining inconsistencies between subjects, pupil groups and classes. The headteacher and governors are aware that even greater urgency is needed over the coming months if the school is to realise its ambition of becoming a good school at the time of its next inspection.

Securing the accuracy of assessment information has been a priority. Much activity has been focused on the moderation of pupils' writing, where 2014 results took an unexpected dip at the end of Year 6. This has led to greater consensus among staff about what achievement looks like for pupils in different year groups of the same ability. This has assured leaders that pupils are being awarded the correct level for their work. The checking of this information against pupils' end-of-year targets shows that the rate of progress pupils make in lessons is accelerating. Regular meetings between leaders and staff about pupils who are falling behind have led to a range of planned interventions. Leaders are aware that they will need to keep a

closer eye on these pupils to ensure that the actions they have put in place are enabling them to catch up quickly.

Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are rising. A greater proportion of teachers is now using the accurate information about pupils' abilities to plan varied tasks that move them on quickly. Nevertheless, there is still some way to go to ensure that all pupils achieve their very best, particularly the most able, because some teachers are still giving all pupils the same work. This slows the progress of those who are capable of achieving the very highest levels.

Leaders with responsibility for English and mathematics are making a greater difference to the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching in their subjects. They are enthusiastic about what they can achieve and have already formulated action plans to move aspects of practice further forward. Timely support and training from a partner school have given them the confidence to hold teachers more readily to account by undertaking learning walks and book scrutinies. The headteacher has rightly identified that these leaders will need more dedicated leadership time for this kind of monitoring and evaluation to develop further and have maximum impact.

Governors have continued to improve their effectiveness in holding leaders to account for the actions being taken to improve the school. The recommendations from the external review of governance have been acted upon quickly. Minutes from the newly formed pupil progress committee record the increased level of challenge and questioning to senior leaders and the additional information demanded by governors for them to be able to check fully on the progress being made by all pupils, including the most able. As governors grow in confidence, they are becoming less reliant on the information provided by the headteacher and are beginning to make their own checks on aspects of the school's work. A more regular programme of school visits is under way. A standing agenda item on all governing body meetings has ensured that the findings from these visits are shared and discussed. Governors have a strong grasp on what needs to be done next to ensure the timely removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Pupils report that teaching is improving, especially in mathematics, where it is more 'fun'. They particularly appreciate the increased opportunities to use their mathematical skills to solve problems and think for themselves.
- Individual pupil targets are provided across classes consistently, so that pupils themselves are clear about where they are at in their learning and what they need to do next to reach an even higher level.
- Pupils acknowledge that some teachers' marking and feedback in books leaves them in no doubt about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.
- Leaders are cross-referencing a wider range of evidence about the quality of teaching, so that they are less reliant on pre-planned, one-off lesson

observations and have a more rounded view of the quality of teaching over time. Staff now realise that it is how they teach 'day-in, day-out' that is of most importance, rather than their performance on any one occasion.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Pupils do not have frequent enough opportunity to write at length, both in English lessons and across the curriculum. This prevents pupils from showing all that they can do and narrows the range of evidence available to make assessments of their writing ability.
- The quality of marking and feedback to pupils is inconsistent. While there are examples of good practice in some books, this is not the case in all classes. Pupils do not receive enough time to address their teachers' comments and learn from their mistakes.
- Leaders do not analyse tracking information on a regular enough basis to know if new initiatives are having the desired effect. They are unable to act as quickly as is needed when pupils are off track and underachieving.

External support

Senior leaders continue to value the challenge and support from the local authority. The intensive support adviser has undertaken regular activities alongside leaders to demonstrate effective approaches to tracking, target-setting and classroom observation. These strategies have been fully implemented by leaders so that they have a more accurate view of the school's performance.

School-to-school support is equally well received. A specialist leader of education for mathematics has delivered an effective programme of training. Staff have particularly appreciated advice around the application of mathematics to problem-solving tasks. They now adapt their mathematics planning more frequently to ensure more regular opportunities for pupils to use their developing skills and think for themselves. Partnership-working is set to continue into the spring term.