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Ms Jacky Steele
Headteacher
Badgemore Primary School
Hop Gardens
Henley-on-Thames
RG9 2HL

Dear Ms Jacky Steele

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Badgemore Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 December 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 June 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:

- ensure subject leaders have the skills they need to monitor the quality of teaching and tackle weaknesses by providing guidance for class teachers
- make sure that the work teachers give pupils provides sufficient challenge and enables all pupils to gain the key skills intended.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the subject leaders for mathematics and literacy, three governors including the vice-chair, and the local authority school improvement leader to discuss the action taken since the last

inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. You accompanied me on short visits to three classes and I visited another class alone.

Context

The new headteacher took up her post in April 2014. The school is undergoing extensive building work.

Main Findings

You are resolute in your determination to move the school to good. The changes you have made are taking the school in the right direction. For example, you have trained teachers so they are better able to plan tasks to meet pupils' needs. As a result of your frequent checks, this is now a more consistent feature of teaching. However, in a minority of classes visited, the tasks set for different groups did not enable all pupils to achieve the key learning planned. For example, in a reading lesson which aimed to develop pupils' comprehension skills, one group were answering comprehension style questions on a passage and another group were following written instructions that required them to use scissors. This group spent longer on carrying out the instruction requiring cutting up than understanding the words used in the instructions. As a result, they did not practise the key skill which was the planned focus of the lesson as much as the group doing comprehension questions.

In mathematics classes teachers are now ensuring the pace of learning is brisk. In classes visited, teachers were asking pupils challenging questions which involved speculative thinking and problem solving. Teachers encouraged pupils to think quickly by framing the questions as mini challenges. However, in a minority of classes when teachers were working closely with one group of pupils, they did not always check the progress of the other pupils. As a result, some pupils who had become less focused were not challenged to stay on task and consequently their progress was slower.

Your development plans are properly focused on the areas for improvement from the recent inspection. The newly formed governors' standards committee is sensibly responsible for monitoring areas of the plan and is doing so effectively. The plan rightly outlines in detail the expected difference actions will make to pupils' achievement by the end of the year. However, it does not include milestones which outline the expected impact of actions taken at specific points within the school year.

Predictions based on recent assessments indicate that achievement will improve this year. You have looked in detail at the progress of different groups of pupils, where this is too slow you have provided extensive extra support. This is beginning to close gaps in achievement between different groups. You have wisely written two separate plans outlining in detail how achievement will be improved in mathematics

and English. The English and mathematics subject leaders are using the plans to prioritise their work. They are not yet evaluating the quality of teaching or training teachers. However, they have started to use information on pupils' progress to monitor the impact of the changes they are making. This is in its early stages of development.

The Chair of Governors has successfully developed the skills of the governing body. Governors are now making better use of information provided by the school about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Governors have spent time in school gathering information for themselves and checking improvements. As a result, they have a very clear view of where strengths and weaknesses are in the quality of teaching. Governors are also more aware of the impact that each class teacher has on pupils' achievement. Where the school's tracking shows variation between different classes, they challenge you to account for this. Governors are now sensibly broadening the range of evidence they use to monitor the impact of changes to include scrutinies of pupils' work.

External support

The school improvement leader has worked closely with the school and has brokered tailor-made support for teachers. He is now helping the headteacher to forge partnerships with local good schools to strengthen leadership capacity. He helpfully attends meetings of the governors' standards committee to support governors' understanding of the information the school provides on pupils' achievement. The school improvement leader has agreed to provide further training for the English and mathematics subject leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hubbard
Her Majesty's Inspector