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Mr J Pass  
Headteacher  
Abbeymead Primary School  
Mead Road  
Abbeymead  
Gloucester  
Gloucestershire  
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Dear Mr Pass

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Abbeymead Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 3 February 2015 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 October 2015. 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:

- organise training in mathematics for teachers in setting work for pupils that is more challenging
- ensure leaders check precisely if the quality of teaching in mathematics is improving to good or better, and so enabling pupils to make better progress.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. Brief visits were made to all classes, with the headteacher, to see the school in action. A selection of pupils' written work was scrutinised. A discussion was had with the headteacher about school information on the progress of pupils in writing and mathematics. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

## **Context**

Since the inspection in October 2014 the teacher responsible for disabled pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs is new to the school. There are changes to the senior leadership team. One senior leader is responsible for Year 3 and Year 4 and the other senior leader is responsible for Year 5 and Year 6. The deputy headteacher leads the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## **Main findings**

You and your deputy headteacher are ambitious for your school. Since the school's inspection you have worked successfully to make the necessary improvements. You began with changes to the responsibilities of your leadership team. There is now a greater clarity in how these leaders contribute to raising standards. The senior leaders are responsible for improving the quality of teaching and learning and the achievement of pupils. Leaders say they feel empowered as a result of the changes. They report having a sharper watching brief on all groups of pupils in the classes they are responsible for. Similarly subject leaders, for example English and mathematics leaders, report that you have created an open and supportive ethos in the school. Consequently, your staff team are right behind you.

Your action plan focuses on the right areas for improvement. Your programme for checking how well the school is doing shows precisely the steps needed to reach your targets. Subject leaders' plans, for example, English and mathematics plans, link well with the overarching school action plan. These links mean that you have a more water tight system for checking how well pupils are doing, for example in writing. You told me that pupils are now making better progress in writing as compared to the previous year; as shown by your most recent school information on pupils' progress. Your deputy headteacher told me that boys in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now more interested in writing stories. These improvements are a result of changes made in the light of training and staff visits to other schools. During our brief tour, we saw how the adult working with a small group helped both boys and girls put the sounds letters make together to spell new words.

You told me that the staff team have 'looked at themselves' to improve pupils' learning and progress. Teachers are now setting work for pupils which contain some challenge. In writing pupils are expected to design and execute their own plan for a piece of work. Pupils, in consultation with their class teacher, are also expected to critically assess how well they have done. This includes the presentation of their work. During the inspection you shared examples of pupils' work where presentation had improved from previous attempts. In all work there is a sharper focus on how to improve. Pupils enthusiastically explained this system, of doing your best, during my visit to their classes. However, the progress that pupils are making across the school in mathematics is not catching up as quickly as in writing. The initial training for staff on the teaching of mathematics has been well received. It was clear when you and I looked at some mathematics books that some pupils are still being set work that is too easy.

Governors are very committed to supporting the school's improvement. Governors report that they now are more confident in challenging senior leaders by asking searching questions. For example, they now ask leaders to explain in detail how they know that actions taken are improving teaching and learning and pupils' achievement. Governors also spend time in school by joining senior leaders on learning walks and looking at pupils' work. The outcomes of these visits are collated and reported back at the governor meetings. Governors report that there is always a focus on the 'even better if' as a way of challenging the school. In this way governors are checking the work of the school for themselves, with a focus that is linked directly to the school action plan.

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 local authority continues to offer useful support to the school through regular progress reviews. The school has accessed support and training from the local authority. For instance, training brokered by the local authority from an external consultant in mathematics has begun to build the teachers' confidence in teaching pupils how to better apply their mental mathematics skills to solve problems. As a result of training the teachers report that pupils now use mathematical terms more routinely in lessons.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Neech  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**