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Scott Dainty
Easton Garford Endowed CofE School
New Road
Easton-on-the-Hill
Stamford
PE9 3NN

Dear Mr Dainty

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Easton Garford Endowed CofE School

Following my visit to your school on 10 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:

- Ensure that planning includes challenge for all pupils, including the most-able, as a matter of routine.
- Continue to develop leadership, at all levels, including the governing body, through training, recruitment and regular monitoring, to sustain the current rate of improvement.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, the numeracy coordinator, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, the Chair of the Governing Body and a foundation governor to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I accompanied

you on a tour of the school. I evaluated the school development plan and action plan. I looked at a range of additional documentation including monitoring records, minutes of meetings of the Interim Executive Board, draft minutes of meetings of the new governing body and the feedback and marking policy. A representative of the diocese attended the meeting at the end of the inspection when verbal feedback was given.

Context

The Interim Executive Board finished their tenure on 31 December 2014 and the new Governing Body took office on 1 January 2015.

The Interim Executive Board registered their interest to the Department of Education to become an academy. The new Governing Body is pursuing this opportunity and has requested an Academy order to enable the school to become an academy as part of the Peterborough Diocese Education Trust.

You have been on secondment to your post as interim acting headteacher since September 2014. You have been appointed to a substantive headship at another primary school. The Governing Body is seeking a permanent replacement for the post of headteacher to start in April 2015.

The number on roll has fallen from 38 to 36.

A regular supply teacher has been covering most of the teaching of Key Stage one over recent months due to staff absence.

Main findings

You have responded promptly to tackling the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report.

Your school development plan includes direct reference to all the areas for improvement. There are clear measurable outcomes with frequent and regular review dates. These reflect a rapid and thorough response to key areas of priority for the school, as well as the areas for improvement specifically. Subject coordinators and members of the new governing body have been allocated responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation appropriately.

You regularly review progress towards achieving the expected outcomes, making amendments and stating next steps when a target is not met. The school development plan is a readily accessible and working document. It is supplemented by an action plan, which helpfully provides further details of actions and their impact in addressing the areas for improvement. For example, details of the revised feedback and marking policy. You have evaluated its impact through focussed learning walks, lesson observations and book scrutiny. Your evaluation shows that

there is improvement in the consistency in the quality and frequency of marking. Pupils have time to respond to written feedback from the teachers in the form of "footsteps" which provide pupils with clear concise ways of practising areas they find difficult and improving their work.

You have created a standard format for the completion of work scrutiny. This has clear and high expectations of effective differentiation and challenge for the most able, the quality of marking and opportunities for extended writing – all addressing key areas for improvement identified previously.

Your evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning shows that the level of challenge for pupils in lessons has improved. This is not a feature of all lessons and is developing further, supported by staff training.

Subject leaders have responded well to leadership development opportunities. You have supported them very well so that they have been able to take on increasing responsibilities for key areas. The subject leader for mathematics has accompanied you on learning walks and carried out work scrutiny. She has moderated her judgements by comparing her evaluations with yours.

You have provided considered and highly effective training and guidance to subject leaders so that they have grown in confidence in their use of data. You are clear on the next steps for their leadership development so that, for example, you will coach subject leaders through their own analysis of data at the next assessment point.

Teachers are making regular use of data to monitor the progress of individual pupils. You have increased the number of assessment points in the year, so that there is more frequent review of progress and prompt identification of underachievement – both of individuals and groups. You have set ambitious targets and interim targets are determined accordingly. These are reviewed and raised appropriately to ensure pupils are on track to meet their end of year target.

You ensure that interventions are put in place when underachievement is identified. These include asking teaching assistants to work with individual pupils and small groups. Teachers are rightly reviewing their strategies to provide additional support to individual pupils in areas where they need more help.

You have introduced a scheme to boost the quality and frequency of extended writing. This has led to more frequent opportunities for extended writing across all stages. There is progress in the quality of hand-writing. Assessments are more accurate. There have been significant professional development opportunities for staff in this area, working with a local primary school. Observations, training and moderation facilitated through this link have led to the successful integration of opportunities for extended writing into planning as a matter of routine.

You have made sound decisions and deployed staff effectively, given a number of constraints. You have nurtured and created a sense of stability. You have forged links with the local pre-school. This is clearly a benefit to the children, staff and parents both formally and informally. There is closer liaison with the pre-school regarding skills development and work to standardise assessments between the school and pre-school. There are opportunities for children at the pre-school and Early Years Foundation Stage to play and learn together.

You have regular contact with parents. You and members of your staff greet pupils as they arrive with their parents. You are readily available for conversations and meetings with parents. Parents attended a recent meeting where they learnt more about the teaching of phonics.

You have paid prompt and close attention to the school environment, making significant improvements to the outdoor area. You have revised the assembly programme. You have incorporated opportunities into the curriculum and enrichment activities for pupils to learn more about faiths and cultures other than their own.

The new governing body has recently been formed and are well-placed to take on their responsibilities, having previously shadowed the Interim Executive Board. They have clear understanding of the immediate priorities for the school through to the end of this academic year, as well as longer term goals they have promptly carried out a skills audit and are planning further recruitment and training in order to fill a few gaps in their experience and expertise. They recognise their responsibility to be in an informed position to play an active part in the monitoring and evaluation of the action plan.

Each governor is linked to key areas, including those which address the areas for improvement, for example, teaching and learning, cultural diversity and vulnerable groups. Governors do not have, and need a link, to champion the needs of the most-able. They are developing a schedule for structured, focussed visits to the school.

Governors are mindful of the need for succession planning, in terms of both the governing body and the headship of the school. They are giving all due priority to matters relating to the leadership of the school and the opportunities presented by the on-going expression of interest in joining a multi-academy trust with the Diocese.

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 school receives good support from the local authority. Review meetings have taken place following the last inspection. The local authority has provided funding for

professional development opportunities at a local primary school for the delivery a scheme to boost the quality of hand-writing. The Chair of the newly re-formed Governing Body is the local authority governor.

You also receive support through the local teaching school alliance. This included work with your special educational need coordinator to complete an audit for the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. You are mentored by a practising headteacher in the alliance.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Carter-Fraser
Her Majesty's Inspector