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Julia Humphrey
Old Buckenham Community Primary School
Abbey Road
Old Buckenham
Attleborough
NR17 1RH

Dear Mrs Humphrey

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Old Buckenham Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 6 May 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in February 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

You took me on a tour of the school, during which we visited all the classrooms, looked at the work in pupils' books and spoke to pupils. I met separately with a small group of pupils to gain their views.

During my visit, I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's single central register of staff employed.

Context

Since the last inspection one member of the senior leadership team has returned from maternity leave and one teacher has left the school. You have restructured the leadership team and have appointed a deputy headteacher from within the school. The local authority supports the governing body at regular meetings. You have recently taken the decision to join other schools in the area as part of the Acorn Co-Operative Learning Alliance.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You have worked hard and have lost no time in identifying appropriate and thorough priorities concerning what needs to be done to improve the school. You have created a senior team who share your vision and determination to succeed. An experienced Improvement Board, together with the governing body and the Acorn Co-Operative Alliance Trust, is in place to provide effective support and challenge. The support you receive from the local authority is something that you value.

Meetings have been held with parents to address some of the issues raised in the last inspection and to keep parents informed of the progress being made. You have encouraged parents to come into school to speak directly to you, and you continue to inform them about school improvements through the newsletters. The school environment is revitalised, with areas created to celebrate the achievements of pupils.

You have clearly used the points for improvement from the section 5 inspection to write a detailed school plan to drive school improvement. You have communicated this plan to the governors and given a summary to parents. You have met with the local authority and ensured that actions and timescales align with the local authority's statement of action. This has resulted in an agreed understanding of the priorities of the school.

You have taken decisive action over the restructuring of the leadership team in the school. Currently they teach their own classes so that they can enhance the quality of provision for the pupils and enable them to make progress in their learning.

The governing body is committed to improving its effectiveness. Following the external review of governance carried out by the local authority, governors are beginning to understand the sort of information and questions they need to ask to hold the school to account for the performance of its pupils. The review suggests a long list of recommendations and governors now need to devise an action plan to enable them to meet these effectively.

Although some of the actions have yet to show sustainable impact, it is clear that you are taking the necessary steps to ensure good progress for all pupils. Your work

on tracking pupil progress is robust and effective in identifying pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their learning, particularly reading, writing and mathematics.

A range of professional development opportunities are underway, especially for mathematics. The leader of mathematics is receiving training and development for her role. There is a programme of staff training and meetings to agree a cohesive approach to the teaching of mathematics within the new national curriculum. This has created a sense of urgency for the school staff, who are keen to develop their skills and improve.

The local authority's statement of action sets out a suitable range of support for the school and is effective in helping governors understand their roles and responsibilities.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk Local Authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kim Hall
Her Majesty's Inspector

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- Director of Children's Services for Norfolk