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Mr H Greenwood
Headteacher
Wainscott Primary School
Wainscott Road
Rochester
ME2 4JY

Dear Mr Greenwood

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wainscott Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 June 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 March 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:

- sharpen up the school development plan so that short-term steps towards longer term goals are easier to measure
- ensure that feedback and guidance to teachers on how to improve the quality of their teaching pays more attention to the impact they are making on pupils' learning.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The meetings focused on the actions taken since the last inspection. Together, we made brief visits to all classrooms, talking to some pupils informally. The school improvement plan was evaluated along with a range of other documents including evidence of leaders' monitoring of the

quality of teaching, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's own records of pupils' attainment and progress, and recent monitoring reports from the local authority.

Context

There have been no changes of staffing or other significant changes in context since the last inspection.

Main findings

During my visit you demonstrated a good knowledge of the school and the areas that need improving. You have begun to address the areas for improvement outlined in the last inspection report and are tackling these with a sense of energy and urgency.

Since the last inspection you have galvanised staff and the wider school community into action, and are moving things forward. You have worked hard on raising expectations of pupil progress and the quality of teaching, and staff are now moving with you to implement the changes required.

The school action plan addresses most of the improvement areas identified in the recent inspection report. Sensibly, you are awaiting the outcome of the review of governance before adding this area of work to the improvement plan. Both you and the local authority have identified that the plan needs sharpening up, and work is under way to do so. More clarity is particularly required around who will monitor the plan, when, and what the measurable outcomes will be. The short term steps identified in the plan as leading to longer term goals have too few impact measures to check progress is being made.

I am pleased to see that you have made a start on updating the teacher appraisal process for monitoring staff performance, and clarifying the link between teaching and the progress of pupils. A greater focus on the use of pupil progress information is also a welcome development in supporting this work.

Staff have benefited from a range of training led by internal and external staff and are becoming better equipped to move things forward. You have instituted more monitoring of teaching through observations, and work and planning scrutiny. However, in providing feedback to teachers there is insufficient clarity about the specific things they should work on, and about the impact their teaching is making on pupils' learning.

Training has begun to ensure teachers provide work that is better matched to pupils' varying abilities. During my visits to classrooms I was able to see the beginnings of the impact of this, although by your own admission, there remains much more to do.

There has been a good focus on improving phonics (the sounds that letters make) teaching across the school, including in Key Stage 2. Sensible changes to the timetable have helped pupils and teachers make links between phonics and other aspects of the curriculum. Work to improve standards in reading, including the appointment of a specialist reading recovery teacher, means pupils are reading more regularly, and indeed pupils told me they read much more than they did before. It was also positive to see attention being given to raising attainment in mathematics, so that mathematical investigations and problem solving now have a higher profile.

Since the inspection, the school has also identified that action is needed to improve pupils' writing. As a result, you have ensured it gets greater emphasis in the curriculum and have sensibly included it in the school improvement plan.

Middle leaders are now beginning to get the support they need to have more impact on the quality of teaching. Training in areas such as monitoring pupil progress and observing teaching is starting to raise their skill levels. It is good to see that more is planned since their direct impact on teaching remains limited.

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 are providing a growing range of support which is making an increasingly positive impact on the school. For example, staff have received training on improving the teaching of guided reading and writing, and the training for middle leaders is provided by the local authority. Potentially useful support has been arranged for you from a National Leader of Education, although this is yet to start.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Close

Her Majesty's Inspector