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Carol Tong  
Lincoln Gardens Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Tong

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lincoln Gardens Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 7 December 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 June 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- establish robust systems to measure the impact of progress
- further delegate leadership responsibility, and where middle leadership is weaker, hold leaders to account for the impact of their actions
- develop systems for checking on the progress of groups of pupils, to ensure that gaps are identified quickly.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was considered, as well as a range of other documents, including leaders' monitoring notes, assessment information, and governing body and local authority notes. Brief visits to classrooms were made with senior leaders to observe teaching. Pupils were questioned about their work and pupils' workbooks were scrutinised.

## **Context**

Since the recent inspection, two new teachers have been appointed, including one newly qualified teacher.

## **Main findings**

You have identified appropriate actions in the school development plan and many of these focus on the areas for improvement raised at the recent Ofsted inspection. However, the plan does not include measurable progress and learning targets and timescales for improvement, so it is not possible for leaders and governors to effectively check whether actions are having the necessary impact.

Leadership is not improving quickly enough because there are too few leaders who have the skills to drive forward actions for school improvement. Checks on the quality of teaching are more frequent and improving, but most are carried out by just one of the senior leaders who has too much ground to cover. Leaders are checking teachers' compliance with non-negotiable features of teaching and not always placing enough emphasis on the impact of these actions on pupils' learning.

All teachers have personal improvement targets, and stronger teachers are beginning to be deployed to support and coach their colleagues. In the few classes where teaching is weaker, one of the senior leaders is working closely with these teachers, making sure that support is available and effectively holding them to account. This is leading to improvements in the practice of individual teachers, including those who are recently qualified.

The teaching of mathematics is improving, following some external training and the introduction of some new strategies. The mathematics subject leader has provided helpful advice to teachers and is checking to make sure that the agreed methods are followed. The teaching of mathematics is strongest in upper Key Stage 2, where the most-able pupils are challenged well. In most classes, activities are now more accurately matched to the abilities of pupils, which ensures that pupils' calculation skills are improving. However, there are still not enough opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding through applying their knowledge in problem-solving tasks and the most able are not challenged well in all classes.

Leaders' and teachers' expectations of pupils' writing are still not high enough, particularly for the most-able writers. Teachers are providing more opportunities for pupils to write; however, when pupils write in subjects other than English, some teachers do not demand the best of their pupils. Teachers are now routinely checking pupils' use of grammar, punctuation and spelling, but in some workbooks so many mistakes are identified that it is not possible for pupils to correct them all. Also, where next steps are identified in marking, teachers' remarks are sometimes too general to move the learning on quickly. Furthermore, too many teachers do not check that pupils are acting on the advice given in subsequent pieces of writing, and this is slowing the progress of some pupils.

Teaching assistants are being redeployed so that they spend most of their time supporting pupils in class, resulting in more effective use of time.

Information provided to governors does not focus on the most important priorities because the school improvement plan is not precise and focused on the impact on pupils' learning. Governors have started to challenge leaders; however their questioning lacks the tenacity needed for rapid improvement. The governing body has recently formed a school improvement committee and has assigned aspects of the school development plan to individual governors to monitor.

### **External support**

The local authority's school improvement partner has made regular visits and has offered considerable challenge and support to leaders. This has had limited impact, because although leaders are beginning to put some essential systems and processes in place, these are not yet robust enough. The local authority recently conducted a joint review of teaching and learning with school leaders which has identified further areas for improvement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for North Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Philip Riozzi  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**