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Mrs Rosalyne Peet  
Brackley Church of England Junior School  
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Brackley  
Northamptonshire  
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Dear Mrs Peet

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Brackley Church of England Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 23 March 2016, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 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 last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that assessment of writing is accurate and enables leaders and governors to secure a reliable view of pupils' progress
- review the progress of pupils at risk of not making sufficient progress and those who have fallen behind more robustly to ensure that teachers and learning support assistants take effective action to ensure that pupils catch up
- extend the remit of the development committee so that governors can scrutinise the actions taken by leaders to implement the school improvement plan effectively.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the interim deputy headteacher who is also the English leader, the administrator of the single central record, the mathematics leader, the leader for special educational needs and disability (SENCo) and members of the local governing body. I also spoke with the local authority school improvement manager and reviewed the support provided by the diocese. I evaluated the school improvement plan with you. I accompanied you on short visits to lessons and I looked at a sample of books with the English and mathematics leaders. We reviewed pupil performance information for 2015 and for pupils currently at the school. I reviewed the minutes of governing body meetings and scrutinised the induction arrangements for new staff. Prior to the inspection, I reviewed previous inspection reports, the school's website, and the published performance information.

## **Context**

There have been significant changes to staff and the governing body since the monitoring visit in June 2015.

Four teachers, including the deputy headteacher, left the school at the end of the summer term and four new teachers, including the mathematics leader, joined the staff in September 2015. In addition, two teachers went from full-time posts to part-time posts at the end of the summer term and now job-share. The English leader has acted as interim deputy headteacher since September 2015. During the autumn term, a part-time SENCo joined the school, a teacher left and a teacher went on maternity leave. You are currently teaching part time in Year 4 to cover for the colleague on maternity leave. A teacher has resigned as of 30 April 2016 and arrangements are underway to secure a replacement and to appoint a substantive deputy headteacher.

At the end of the summer term, two learning support assistants (LSAs) also resigned and these were replaced by two new LSAs in September. Two more LSAs left in February 2016 and they were replaced immediately.

Six governors have left the governing body and five have joined since the monitoring inspection in June 2015. The new governors include an experienced headteacher and deputy headteacher from neighbouring authorities. A new chair and vice-chair took up their roles in September 2015.

Since June 2015, seven of the eight classrooms and several meeting rooms and intervention spaces have been redecorated and refurbished. In addition, leaders have ensured that furniture is fit for purpose and appropriate resources are available to pupils.

## **Main findings**

Leaders have taken effective action to make the improvements set out in the monitoring visit letter in June 2015 to improve the post-Ofsted inspection improvement plan.

The changes to the membership of the governing body since June have enabled governors to fulfil their role more effectively. Governors are more questioning of school leaders and are prepared to challenge leaders appropriately. Consequently, governors have a better understanding of the school and know the areas that must improve if pupils are to make strong progress and achieve good outcomes. The development committee, made up of committee chairs, which was established in the autumn term 2015, is well placed to extend their scrutiny of pupil standards to the impact and implementation of the post-Ofsted improvement plan.

An external review of governance was undertaken by an independent education consultant and was completed in the summer term. Governors and leaders have acted effectively on the recommendations of the review.

Leaders and governors also commissioned a review the pupil premium grant. The findings of this report have been included in the revised post-Ofsted improvement plan. Governors have a good understanding of the provision that leaders and teachers make for disadvantaged pupils and the standards they achieve.

The improvements you have secured in the fabric of the school – the refurbished classrooms and shared spaces, the provision of appropriate furniture and resources – have physically embodied your high expectations of pupils, staff and governors. The school community are increasingly clear that school is about pupils learning and that you have high expectations of what pupils should achieve and the provision that staff and governors make.

Leaders track pupils' achievements and review pupils' progress termly. You introduced this in spring 2015 and it enables you and leaders to support and challenge teachers and teaching assistants about the progress their pupils make. However, leaders recognise that these discussions need to be more explicit and accountability based if they are to ensure that pupils make strong progress. Leaders collect pupil performance information every half term and use it to discuss, with LSAs, the progress their pupils are making. This is a missed opportunity because leaders also need to hold these discussions with the pupils' teachers so that together with their LSAs, they can ensure that pupils who have fallen behind catch up and those at risk of falling behind receive effective support so that they do not.

Leaders use a range of strategies to monitor the outcomes of pupils and the quality of teaching, including evaluating pupil performance information, lesson observations, looking at books and reviewing planning. As a result, they have a

well-informed view of the progress pupils make in reading and mathematics. However, leaders are not confident in their assessments of the progress pupils are making in writing. Overall, leaders have an accurate view of teaching, including where expectations and practice need to improve. Leaders need to continue to act on this, providing effective support to teachers, to ensure that all pupils make strong progress.

Leaders are taking effective action to ensure that pupils are challenged. They scrutinise planning and books to check that teachers' expectations are sufficiently high and that pupils are challenged in lessons. In addition, they have introduced a layered approach to learning that gives pupils the opportunity to learn through progressively more challenging tasks, such as bronze, silver or gold. Evidence from books shows that this is becoming established and is well understood by pupils.

Middle leadership is strong. The SENCo, English leader and mathematics leader are experienced and skilled. They have a good understanding of the standards in their areas of responsibility; they know where there are gaps in their subject provision and the pupils that need to catch up. They support colleagues effectively.

At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2015, overall pupils' progress from their starting points in reading and mathematics was significantly below the national average and below in the national average in writing. The proportion of pupils who made expected progress was at or close to the national average in each subject but was below the national average for more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have evaluated this information and are tracking those pupils at risk of making insufficient progress. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to be close to or above the national floor targets for age-related expectations for 2016.

Behaviour in lessons is good. Adults have high expectations of pupil behaviour; ensuring that pupils listen attentively and engage in independent or group learning tasks quickly and wholeheartedly. The bright, stimulating, interesting and well-equipped environments created by leaders and staff support this further.

### **External support**

The local authority has provided effective support and challenge. Local authority officers hold leaders and governors to account for securing the necessary improvements. In addition, they have arranged for school-to-school support to help develop the provision for English. The diocese has also enabled school-to-school support to improve the teaching of mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the diocese of Peterborough, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Derek Myers  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**