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Mrs Theresa Alford
Acting Headteacher
Field Place Infant School
Nelson Road
Worthing
West Sussex
BN12 6EN

Dear Mrs Alford

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Field Place Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 13 April 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in July 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 all of the statutory requirements of the website are in place
- ensure that plans show how governors will evaluate the impact of leaders' actions to raise pupils' achievement.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, the acting deputy headteacher, four governors including the chair of governing body through a conference call, and I held a discussion with representatives of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I visited classrooms with you, spoke to pupils,

looked at work in pupils' books and evaluated the school improvement plan. I also evaluated leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning and current performance information. The single central record was checked.

Context

The headteacher, a senior leader and one teacher left the school. In addition, the school bursar, one governor and the clerk to the governing body also left. Two temporary teachers, a teacher in charge of the special support centre, a clerk to the governing body and a school business manager have been appointed. Three governors have joined the governing body. A consultant headteacher is working in the school one day a week. Interviews for the substantive headteacher post are due to take place imminently.

Main findings

You have taken effective action to address the areas identified at the last inspection to improve teaching and the quality of leadership. Coherent plans are shared and used effectively as part of the daily life of the school. All staff understand the priorities and are able to play their part in improving outcomes for pupils. You have provided leaders across the school with the right support to do their job with improved confidence and success. You and the governing body have taken swift action to address underperformance and have refocused school improvement work, rightly, on improving the quality of teaching on a day-to-day basis in every classroom. Consequently, teaching is strengthening and pupils' achievement is picking up more strongly.

Middle leaders now have the right skills to match the responsibilities they hold and can talk with clarity about their work because they know what senior leaders expect of them. Senior leaders hold middle leaders to account for the effectiveness of their work. This was not the case in the past. Subject action plans set out clearly what will happen and when. Since the last inspection, the range and frequency of leaders' checks on the quality of teaching in each subject and year group has increased because leaders allocate more time to carry these out. Opportunities to shadow experienced leaders are valued by middle leaders. These have strengthened the effectiveness of their leadership and their impact on raising the quality of teaching across the school.

The quality of teaching is more consistent in key stage 1 now because leaders make sure teachers get the right individual support, where necessary, to improve their skills. Leaders now expect all teachers to make better use of what pupils know and can do when they plan. In key stage 1, for example, leaders have made changes to the way in which phonics (the sounds letters make) is organised and delivered so that pupils can develop their knowledge more quickly. Teachers check regularly which sounds they can say, read and write and move pupils on more promptly when

they are ready. In Year 1, pupils' writing shows accurate use of phonics to write sentences for a range of different purposes. Their writing builds on their achievements at the end of the early years in the samples reviewed. This is reflected in the school's current achievement information which shows that more pupils are on track to secure the standards expected for their age at the end of Year 1, including those that are disadvantaged, in both phonics and writing.

Teachers are more skilled now at knowing what pupils need to learn next because they are given opportunities to talk regularly with colleagues in school and across the locality about their assessment of pupils' work. Teachers are making sure that they help pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do next through conversations with pupils when they are working. Pupils' work improves immediately when this happens and becomes more accurate because pupils make changes quickly. All teachers know how much progress each pupil in their class is expected to make and the milestones for achievement that have been agreed for each term. They routinely discuss any pupils at risk of falling behind and are included in making decisions about what needs to be put into place to help pupils when this happens.

Governors have utilised the recent review of governance to identify shortcomings in their work and are tackling these with renewed energy. Stronger checks on teachers' performance, for example, ensure that all pay decisions now link with high-quality teaching and leadership. Governors have secured the range of skills necessary to carry out their statutory responsibilities more effectively than in the past. They have recruited wisely to fill any gaps and set up committee structures which enable them to improve their knowledge about the actions leaders are taking and why. Their evaluation of the impact of leaders' actions on pupils' achievement is not yet systematic, however. This is because leaders' plans do not show how governors will measure the success of actions to raise pupils' achievement clearly enough. Although changes are being made to ensure that the school's website contains all the required statutory information, there are some omissions such as a more comprehensive evaluation of the use of additional funding.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority plays an effective role in the improvement of this school through its brokerage of effective leadership, external validation of improvements and the provision of consultancy. Middle leaders use this consultancy well to help them improve teaching and assessment. Reports accurately evaluate the work of the school and pinpoint clearly further improvements that need to be made.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for West Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Abigail Wilkinson
Her Majesty's Inspector