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Mr Andrew Canadine
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Canadine,

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Helpringham School

Following my visit to your school on 24 November 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 June 2016. 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:

- write with urgency a detailed school improvement plan and comprehensive plans for both English and mathematics addressing the areas for improvement identified in the last section 5 report
- ensure that these plans contain concise actions, key dates for completion and names of specific individuals who will monitor successful completion of the actions.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, the chair and one other member of the governing body, subject leaders and a group of pupils. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I toured the school to observe learning and examined a range

of pupils' books with your lead teacher. A representative of the local authority and I held a telephone conversation to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

Context

There have been no major contextual changes since the last section 5 report. However, you were absent at the start of term and commenced work on a phased return basis. On the day of the inspection the school website was found to be non-compliant with statutory guidelines. You ensured that all omissions were remedied before I left the school site.

Main findings

You have an understanding of the school's key priorities. However, these have not been communicated effectively enough to staff and governors. The current school improvement plan and the plan to improve English do not include clear, detailed actions, timescales or monitoring opportunities. There is no plan in place for mathematics. This means that governors are unable to measure the impact of any actions that are being taken. They therefore do not have a clear and succinct view of what the school needs to do further in order for the necessary rapid improvements to take place.

The English subject leader has shared information with staff to help them to develop pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar knowledge. There are also plans for increased writing moderation with another school and for lesson observations to take place. The mathematics subject leader intends to examine teachers' planning, develop a whole-school calculation policy and provide training for teaching assistants. While these ideas are well intentioned, leaders have been too slow to implement them. Furthermore, the necessary monitoring and evaluation activities to check the impact these actions are making have not been planned.

Leaders have started to raise the expectations of teachers and pupils in all subjects through the introduction of 'the 3Ps – Pride, Presentation and Positive attitude'. As a result of this, some classes and year groups are showing elements of improved progress. However, this is not consistent across the school. Teachers have also begun to explore how to share appropriate expectations for each year group. This is attempted, for example, by displaying the targets in the front of pupils' books. The process has yet to be fully implemented.

Teachers are now assessing pupils' learning more accurately. This is beginning to inform their future planning and help ensure that work is matched more accurately to pupils' abilities. Plans are now in place for assessments in reading, writing and mathematics to occur every half term.

Your current tracking information shows that approximately half the school's

disadvantaged pupils are currently working below age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. The allocation of the extra funding these pupils receive, and the impact it makes, needs urgent attention and careful review. A pupil premium review is scheduled for December 8 2016.

Governors acknowledge that the current plans for improvement are not helpful to them in monitoring the progress that the school is making towards becoming a good school. They are keen to receive regular, detailed progress and attainment information from you on different groups of pupils. Recently recruited new governors with specific strengths, such as safeguarding, have helped to build on the existing skill base of the governing body. Consequently, governors have improved capacity to monitor the work of the school more closely in the future.

External support

The school currently receives six days of support per year from a local authority advisor. Despite this, school leaders have not worked with sufficient urgency or focus to tackle the areas identified for improvement at the time of the last inspection. The impact of external support on helping to focus leaders' work on key priorities will be explored in any further monitoring visits.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Stonier
Her Majesty's Inspector