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Nicola Parkinson  
Headteacher  
Robert Bakewell Primary School and Community Centre  
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Loughborough  
Leicestershire  
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Dear Miss Parkinson

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Robert Bakewell Primary School and Community Centre**

Following my visit to your school on 19 June 2017, 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 November 2016. 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 in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that teachers give pupils more frequent opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills in mathematics.

**Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, two members of the governing body, and a representative of the Loughborough Primary Academy Partnership (LPAP), to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I looked at a range of documents, including the school's action plans, information about the attainment and progress of current pupils, and safeguarding documents.

I visited all classrooms, looking at pupils' work and discussing it with them. I spoke with parents at the start of the day and with a group of pupils from key stage 2. I had lunch with a group of pupils from the Reception class.

## **Context**

Since the previous section 5 inspection, new early years and mathematics leaders have taken up their posts. You intend to retire at the end of the summer term and a new, experienced headteacher has been appointed to begin in September 2017.

## **Main findings**

You, other senior leaders and the governing body have reacted swiftly to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The effective post-inspection improvement plan and subject action plans are relevant, and contain necessary timescales, responsibilities, measures of success and resource allocations. Governors recognise the importance of monitoring these plans closely in order to hold leaders fully to account for the actions they take to secure rapid improvement.

Your monitoring timetable shows clearly when activities are due to take place and who is responsible for carrying them out. These activities include lesson observations, checks on pupils' books, learning walks and interviews with pupils. The activities have a specific focus taken from one of the action plans. After a monitoring activity, feedback is given promptly to teachers so they are fully aware of their strengths and areas for development. Senior staff then check to ensure that teachers have changed their practice in these development areas. Outcomes from these monitoring activities are shared with the governing body. Consequently, governors have a good knowledge of the school, its strengths and areas for development.

Governors are now checking the work of the school more frequently. Focused visits are followed up with a detailed report, giving the governing body an overview of, for example, the attainment and progress of the most able pupils.

Minutes from meetings of the teaching and learning committee show a good level of questioning from the governing body. One governor told me, 'Governors are now challenging, but in a supportive way.'

The subject leaders for English and mathematics are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They have an accurate overview of how well groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils, are performing in each class. As a result, it is clear which pupils are making good progress and which require extra support. You and the mathematics subject leader have already identified that teachers are not providing frequent enough opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their problem-solving skills.

You have ensured that meetings with teachers to discuss pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics occur regularly. Assessment information is analysed carefully and discussed with teachers. The information you use shows that large proportions of pupils are on track to achieve the standards expected for their age and are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Currently, higher numbers of pupils in all classes are on track to achieve at a greater depth than at the same time last year. This detailed information is shared frequently with the governing body.

Activities are now matched well to pupils' abilities. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils in mathematics. For example, a pupil in Year 5 was challenged to draw a circle defined through angles measured with a protractor. Pupils told me that the level of difficulty of their work in mathematics had increased recently and they enjoyed testing themselves against the 'spicy hot chilli' challenge. Pupils are resilient and have a good understanding of how to improve their own learning. They explained clearly how they might struggle at first, or 'fall into the learning pit' as they described it, before fully understanding a new concept.

New, daily guided-reading sessions have had a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils are taught explicitly how to infer, deduce and predict from various texts. As a result, pupils' comprehension skills have improved.

Teachers and teaching assistants ask pupils questions that help to deepen thinking. For example, a teacher asked a group of pupils in Year 5, 'Why do we need to do this next?' when they were exploring the idea of long multiplication. Pupils then maturely discussed a series of possible solutions to the question before deciding on the correct answer.

You have put a number of strategies in place to help improve attendance. Letters and text messages are sent to parents, and you expect them to explain unauthorised absences. Fines have been issued for poor attenders and for those families who choose to take holidays during term time. The attendance improvement officer works closely with families, making home visits and encouraging parents to send their children to school regularly. Rewards are given to those individuals and classes who attend regularly. Consequently, current attendance information indicates that attendance rates have improved since last year, although they are still just below national averages.

### **External support**

A strong network of support is offered by the LPAP. You are working closely with other schools within the partnership to ensure, for example, that staff take up opportunities to share good teaching and leadership practice. They also have opportunities to share relevant training with other teachers and governors. Staff from other schools in the network, including the early years leaders, special educational needs leaders and the business managers, meet regularly to discuss

any successes and ongoing issues.

The LPAP has provided training and opportunities for teachers in all year groups to check the accuracy of their assessments of pupils' work. This ensures that teachers have the necessary skills to judge pupils' attainment and progress. As a result, they are able to plan carefully for the next steps in pupils' learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Stonier  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**