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Mr Christopher James
Headteacher
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Dear Mr James

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hatfield Peverel St Andrew's Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 13 March 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 October 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:

- revise the action plan so that the measures for success relate specifically to the expected improvements to teaching and pupils' learning, and that responsibilities for completing, monitoring and evaluating actions are set out clearly
- make sure that subject leaders play an active part in planning improvements, implementing changes and evaluating pupils' progress.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, the local authority standards and excellence commissioner and diocesan adviser working with the school, two groups of pupils, and the subject leaders for science and physical education. We discussed the actions taken since the most recent inspection. The school's action plan was discussed and evaluated. Together with you and the deputy headteacher, we observed teaching in all classes. We scrutinised pupils' work in books and on display. Reports from the improvement board, the external review of governance, the audit of safeguarding arrangements and the records of lesson observations were considered.

Context

The subject leader for English is on long-term planned absence and the mathematics leader is on long-term sick leave.

Main findings

After the initial disappointment with the inspection judgements, staff and governors wasted no time in getting on with what needed to be done. Some improvements are already evident.

- During the autumn term, together with the deputy headteacher, you tackled the most important things first. An external review of safeguarding arrangements took place soon after the inspection, and actions taken since then have added rigour to the arrangements to protect pupils. Staff and governors had training to update their awareness of the 'Prevent' duties. The deputy headteacher has been trained as a designated teacher for child protection, which means that there are now two designated staff.
- In response to parents' concerns about supervision at the start and end of the day, arrangements were changed quickly. Additional staff are on duty and more resources are available for pupils to play with at lunchbreaks. Incidents of inappropriate or over-boisterous behaviour have reduced since the inspection.
- Governance has improved as a result of concerted and urgent action by the governing body. An external review of governance was arranged as soon as was possible. The review gave governors helpful pointers to improve their work. Requests for additional information about pupils' progress, arranging more contact with staff and parents, and highlighting in the minutes of meeting details of their challenge to senior leaders, all sprang directly from the review. The actions have sharpened the work of governors so that they are better informed and challenge the school's work more effectively than before.
- Soon after the inspection, and in partnership with leaders and governors, local

authority officers established an improvement board. The board is viewed by all as useful in supporting and challenging leaders and governors to raise standards.

- Local authority officers helped to set up support from a local school. Senior staff and the governing body have already established productive links with the school, initially to learn from their monitoring practice.
- Since January 2017, work has started in earnest to improve pupils' skills in mathematics and writing. Challenging pupils to explain what they are doing, how and why, is helping them to concentrate harder and play a more active part in their learning. There are more opportunities for pupils to apply what they know to solve problems but, in mathematics, opportunities are mostly limited to formal calculations. There are too few opportunities to explore and investigate more complex problems. In some year groups, pupils are challenged more successfully than in others, which is reflected in the rates of academic progress so far this year.
- Having identified lower-than-expected achievements by the end of the academic year for pupils in Year 5, swift action was taken to help make up for lost learning. Leaders and governors are keeping a close eye on how well pupils are catching up, with high expectations that the lost ground will be recovered by the end of this academic year.

It is too soon to see improvements in some of the areas identified for development in the previous inspection report, because there is a phased plan to address some aspects more comprehensively as the school year progresses. Pupils' cultural development will be tackled later in the year. Work has started on deploying teaching assistants more effectively. Some training has taken place but there is still more to do to make sure that support is given to pupils in appropriate ways.

There are some things that could slow the rate of improvement if not addressed soon.

- Most of the monitoring of teaching, staff training and modelling of good practice is done by you and the deputy headteacher, which is working well to establish high expectations for teachers' performance. In the long term, the two of you cannot do it all.
- The action plan has not been drafted well enough to make sure that actions are monitored well. Measures for success do not focus sufficiently on how outcomes for pupils will improve.
- The absence of subject leaders for literacy and mathematics, together with inexperienced leaders of other subjects, means that responsibilities for improvement are not sufficiently shared or developed. Subject leaders do not have clear, formal plans for how they will contribute to overall school improvement.
- Arrangements to assess pupils' achievements give staff sufficient and accurate information to know what pupils know and can do. A clear strategic overview of

whether enough pupils make sufficient progress in enough subjects is not in place.

- Records of inappropriate behaviour are not sufficiently detailed to check whether more can be done to give pupils good support when they need it.
- Records of monitoring of teaching by you and the deputy headteacher are not detailed enough about how teaching impacts on pupils' progress.

There is no complacency about the extent of the work that needs to be done to improve the school's performance to good. Now that the foundations for improvement are firmly established, staff and governors can move forward with confidence.

External support

Leaders and governors are very positive about the support from the local authority. The improvement board has met twice. The report for the most recent meeting suggests that discussions centred around actions, rather than the difference that the actions are making on teaching and pupils' progress.

In the recent monitoring visit, the standards and excellence commissioner noted similar strengths and weaknesses as seen during this inspection, including some weak practice in assessment.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector