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Mrs Frances Swallow
Headteacher
Marsden Infant and Nursery School
Brougham Road
Marsden
Huddersfield
West Yorkshire
HD7 6BN

Dear Mrs Swallow

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Marsden Infant and Nursery School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 24 October 2012, and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff, governors, the local leader of education and representative from the local authority who took time to speak with me.

Since the inspection there have been few changes to staffing. The deputy headteacher has returned part-time and this role is now being shared with another teacher. Currently, one teacher is on long-term absence and this post is being covered by a newly qualified teacher.

As a result of the inspection on 7 March 2012, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 show that standards in reading and mathematics have improved. Across the school, standards in writing have not shown similar improvement and the school has identified this as a priority for training and development. Leaders have worked with the local authority to ensure their assessments of pupils' ability when they enter school and at the end of Key Stage 1 are accurate. Their analysis of data shows that there are still areas that need to be addressed, for example, the progress of boys in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the numbers of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 check on pupils' understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics).

Leaders and teachers have begun to use a computerised system to track the attainment and progress of pupils. This enables them to check on the attainment of different groups of pupils, for example, girls, boys, those with special educational needs and those eligible for



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

free school meals. A new system of meetings between the relevant leaders and individual class teachers has been established to discuss the progress of pupils. However, summaries of assessment information do not show clearly enough the numbers of pupils who are falling behind. As a result, leaders and governors are not clear enough about the effectiveness of actions to address the needs of pupils who are not making expected progress.

Teachers are working with a leader from another school and, as a result, are becoming more reflective about what they can improve in their lessons. Where teaching is good, teachers plan brief and clear introductions to learning which enable pupils to get on quickly with activities that help to develop their understanding. However, leaders are aware that there is still some teaching that is less effective, particularly where it fails to build on pupils' previous understanding and identify and address misconceptions. Teachers have worked to ensure that there are more opportunities for pupils to engage in lessons. For example, by making sure there are opportunities to talk to a partner at certain points during a lesson. However, opportunities are missed to capture some of the ideas that pupils share and this slows the progress they make in lessons.

Pupils' behaviour remains positive. A few of the small group of children who spoke to the inspector said there were one or two pupils who still 'mess around'. Observations of pupils' behaviour suggest their behaviour is managed appropriately and there is little disruption to lessons. Logs kept by teachers do not record unacceptable behaviour in the same way. This makes monitoring of these incidents difficult and consequently means there is a lack of robust evidence to back up the views of staff that behaviour is improving. One factor affecting pupils' behaviour in Key Stage 1 lessons is the lack of opportunities for independent learning. This is because pupils are guided too closely by teaching assistants and additional adults. Too often, these adults miss opportunities to take a step back and allow pupils to 'have a go'. As a result, valuable learning points which arise from pupils' mistakes are missed.

The roles of senior leaders have been reviewed and they are clearer about their responsibilities. However, their ability to focus on what is really making a difference to pupils' learning and effectiveness of teaching is still in need of further development. The headteacher is aware that improvement plans are not sharp enough and that the lack of clear, objective and measurable milestones is hampering their efforts to evaluate their effectiveness. Nevertheless, the headteacher is clear that the focus now needs to be about improving the quality of teaching and that leaders and managers should refocus their efforts on making a difference in the classroom. The school has agreed a new appraisal policy for managing the performance of teachers. This ensures that the progress pupils make is linked to teachers' yearly evaluations.

The local authority, whose statement of action has been judged fit for purpose, has brokered the support of another headteacher from a local school. This is having a positive impact in identifying the need for leaders and managers to improve the way they check that their action are making a difference. Although there has been little additional support for the



governing body, there are plans for the local headteacher to meet with the governing body in the near future and support them in ensuring that they hold the school to account more effectively by identifying clearly and being able to measure the impact of the school's work.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mr Adrian Guy
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2012

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing robust systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching in order to identify areas for improvement which are then regularly reviewed
 - improving systems to assess pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 to ensure that the school has an accurate view of the progress that pupils are making
 - ensuring that development plans set clear, measurable targets to enable the governing body to hold the school to account.

- Raise pupils' achievement by:
 - improving the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1, to ensure that introductions to lessons are timely, activities are consistently well matched to pupils' needs, and pupils have more opportunities to be engaged actively in their learning
 - ensuring that teaching consistently promotes pupils' good behaviour.

