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17 October 2013

Ann Beardall
Great Massingham CofE Primary School
Weasenham Road
Great Massingham
PE32 2EY

Dear Ms Beardall

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Great Massingham CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 October 2013 with Chris Moodie HMI, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings of our visit. We thank you for the help you gave us 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 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

With the support of governors you are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- Review some of the timescales in the post-Ofsted action plan to bring more urgency to improvement.
- Clarify plans to improve the outdoor space for the youngest children.
- Improve the leadership of teaching by:
 - focusing more on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning
 - ensuring that teaching assistants and teachers analyse accurately the difference they make to pupils' progress
 - and making scrutiny of pupils' work an integral part of the monitoring of lessons.

Evidence

During the visit, Chris and I held meetings with you and three governors to discuss the action taken since the July inspection. We also met a senior officer of the local authority. We evaluated the post-Ofsted action plan and discussed with you the criteria you use to evaluate the quality of teaching. We also checked the quality of marking in the Key Stage 2 class and looked at the learning environment. We met the staff at the end of the day.

Context

The headteacher retired after the inspection and you were appointed partnership headteacher for this school for half of your time over a period of two years. You continue as headteacher of Harpley Primary School, sharing your week equally between the two schools.

Main findings

Your appointment is leading to rapid change. You have the confidence of governors and the staff. The staff are highly committed and are quickly putting in place some strategies to improve their practice. For example, marking in the Key Stage 2 class is good. Pupils, in that class, are getting clear feedback on what they need to do to improve their work. You have also re-organised a room for the youngest children. This 'challenge' area is a better environment for learning and enjoyment, although the outdoor space requires urgent attention.

The post-Ofsted action plan is fit for purpose, but the proportion of good or better teaching should be higher to accelerate pupils' progress. Milestones are not always clear and some timescales are not urgent enough. You have good systems in place to monitor teaching but the scrutiny of pupils' work must now feature more strongly and frequently.

With the timely support and expertise of governors, you are taking quick action to focus on what matters most. Governors are very clear about what needs to be done and are well placed to hold the school to account. Consequently, the school is making rapid progress towards becoming a good school.

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

External support

The staff work in close partnership with Harpley Primary school and this is already having some impact, for example in the early years and key Stage 1. The school is also part of the local authority 'Norfolk To Good and Great' initiative, although you are not yet clear about what this means in practice. You have access to a local authority adviser and the senior officer from the local authority is expecting you to be proactive in seeking help. It is too early to see whether this external support is making a difference.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk and the Norwich Diocese.

Yours sincerely

Marianick Ellender-Gelé
Her Majesty's Inspector