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Ms Gill Gillison
Headteacher
Pinfold Primary School
Pinfold Lane
Scarisbrick
Ormskirk
Lancashire
L40 8HR

Dear Ms Gillison

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Pinfold Primary School, Lancashire

Following my visit with David Selby Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 15 October 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 2013. 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. The school should take further action to:

- organise the school improvement plans so that they form one coherent document which sets out how the school will get to good quickly and allows all involved to plot that progress
- make sure that the expected outcomes for all activities link specifically to improvements in pupils' achievement
- make clear the exact strategies the school will take to further strengthen the quality of teaching
- create opportunities for governors to visit and observe outstanding governance in other schools.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the Chair of the Governing Body, four other governors, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plans were evaluated. I scrutinised a file of evidence you had compiled which included records of lesson observations and work scrutiny. I sampled some pupils' workbooks.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the inspection. A new parent governor has been appointed to the governing body.

Main findings

You, staff and governors have responded quickly to the findings of the recent inspection. Governors have moved swiftly in establishing systems which will enable them to more effectively check on the school's performance. Immediately after the inspection governors held an extra meeting to determine how they would check more carefully the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and wrote a plan to aid their activities. Groups of governors took responsibility for reviewing different aspects of the school's work. Working in teams they have gathered more information about the performance of the school in order to challenge leadership more fully. For example, one group has developed the self-evaluation process using the Department for Education's key questions and already the governors have a much better understanding of their role in school improvement. Another group is reviewing the attainment and tracking system. After a briefing from senior leaders, one governor has made a full analysis of the progress of each pupil from their different starting points to the end of summer term 2013. This analysis is to be shared with all governors at a meeting shortly. Governors recognise that this is a vital step in enabling them to hold senior leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Governors know that they all need more training in the effective use of pupils' progress information. Nevertheless, this analysis provides a baseline from which progress can be measured and evaluated.

The Chair of Governors has already held discussions with governors from effective schools. With the appointment of a new parent governor the governing body is full. Governors have completed an audit of their skills with a view to sharing their strengths and identifying training needs for individuals and collectively. These actions reflect their commitment to carrying out their roles effectively in order to support and challenge the school and improve outcomes for pupils.

You and your staff have reviewed the guidance for marking and have introduced a code of 'two stars and a wish' so that pupils understand how well they have done and what they need to do to make their work better. Evidence from your monitoring activities and the scrutiny of books we made shows that this technique is being used by all teachers. However, some marking is stronger than others as it relates directly to the pupils' target which will take them on in that subject, while other examples show marking which refers to presentation or amount of work. Nonetheless, these signs of success bode well for the future. You have introduced some ideas to improve the quality of writing which includes training for teachers and providing more interesting activities as a stimulus for some groups of pupils. Your evidence shows that there is less reliance on worksheets and more use of resources and equipment to aid pupils' learning.

Improvement plans are in place and cover the most pressing priorities; they have been amended after the inspection to include the recommendations. Plans include the action to be taken and intended outcomes and reflect your ambitious target for pupils' progress. Teaching was judged to be good at the last inspection so your plan covers the aspects within teaching identified in the report. It would be beneficial for you to organise all the plans into one overarching document with very clear review points so that all involved can check the effect of planned actions on pupils' achievement. It would be helpful to state exactly what action will be taken to further improve teaching by for example, observing outstanding teaching and deciding what outstanding teaching will be like at Pinfold.

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

Her Majesty's Inspector will:

- work with governors to increase their knowledge and understanding of the information on pupils' progress
- invite the school to an Ofsted 'getting to good' seminar
- work with the headteacher to model how to scrutinise pupils' work books
- partner the school to one which has improved the quality of pupils' writing
- signpost the school to Ofsted's expert knowledge and recent report.

External support

The local authority has supported the school in the recording of its most recent evaluation information. Due to the grade profile of the inspection judgements it was deemed unnecessary for the local authority to introduce its monitoring team. However, after discussions with me the local authority representative will be supporting you in collating your action plans.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Lancashire and as below.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Mulgrew

Her Majesty's Inspector