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Alexandra O'Connor
Headteacher
Castle Camps CofEV Primary School
Church Lane
Castle Camps
Cambridgeshire
CB21 4TH

Dear Miss O'Connor

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Castle Camps CEV Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 14 February 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 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:

- write one action plan that sets out how the school is addressing the key issues from the inspection
- involve all staff in identifying how to achieve the targets on the action plan
- make sure that governors are fully involved in checking that the school is meeting these targets.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, teachers, the Chair of Governors and some members of the Governing Body and a representative

of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The action plan was evaluated and we observed teaching in all the classes.

Context

Since the Section 5 inspection a new teacher is being recruited for Class 2 and the Class 5 teacher has retired.

Main findings

Since the Section 5 inspection you have strengthened the leadership team so that they are clear about their role and responsibilities for school improvement. You have made sure that all teachers have taken part in good quality training and as a result teaching has improved. This is evident in the most recent information about pupils' progress in every class. Most pupils are now making good progress from their starting points in mathematics, reading and writing. However progress remains uneven in mathematics because teachers are not as confident in teaching this subject. You have started to address this by working with advisers from the local authority and a nearby good school. The teacher leading mathematics is new to this role and is working with the local authority mathematics adviser and a leading mathematics teacher to help her improve teaching and learning across the school. This is at the early stage of development and it is too soon to see the full impact of this work. As part of the school's work to improve pupils' skills, the mathematics leader has introduced a fortnightly mathematics challenge which pupils work on at home. Parents are very pleased with this homework because they know exactly how to help their children improve their mathematics skills.

Teachers are more accurate in evaluating the level that pupils are working at because you and the teacher leading literacy have established a consistent whole-school approach to assessment. Teachers look at pupils' writing together and use clear criteria for making their judgements. Teachers have a much better understanding of the new system for tracking pupils' progress. As a result any pupils falling behind with their learning are quickly identified and programmes put in place to help them catch up.

The governors are beginning to take a more active role in challenging school improvement. They have set up a programme of formal visits to look at how the school is addressing the key issues from the section 5 inspection.

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 school is drawing well upon the external support provided by the local authority. For example the mathematics adviser has helped the teacher leading mathematics to

write a new school policy for how pupils record their calculations. The school has made links with a local good school and is extending these links to other schools in the area with a particular focus on improving subject leadership and teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Winyard
Her Majesty's Inspector