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23 September 2014

Diane Ekins  
Headteacher  
Ranelagh Primary School  
Paul's Road  
Ipswich  
Suffolk  
IP2 0AN

Dear Mrs Ekins

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ranelagh Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 22 September 2014, 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 month and year. 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:

- Review the curriculum to ensure that all pupils are challenged to learn at a sufficiently high level.
- Redesign the lesson observation system to ensure that it monitors pupils' learning rather than teacher activity.
- Ensure that the accuracy of assessment is checked.
- Ensure that governors devise precise and challenging targets for the ongoing achievement of all year groups, and that they monitor progress towards them rigorously.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the assistant headteacher, the vice-chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority to

discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement and action plans were evaluated together with records of assessment, student progress, and details of the lesson observation system. Short visits were paid to all classes in order to evaluate learning.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection the school roll has increased by 15 students.

## **Main findings**

Since the last inspection more details of the results of the summer 2014 national tests have emerged. Overall, there is a lack of consistency. At Key Stage 1, results show substantial improvement in reading, writing and mathematics. However, standards in writing remain below average, and around national average in reading and mathematics. Key Stage 2 results present a mixed picture. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level of attainment declined in mathematics and is now below the national average for 2013. In reading the proportion increased and is above. Writing remains unchanged, being below national expectations. The numbers of pupils in various groups are too small to indicate reliable trends in the gaps between, for example, the attainment of boys and girls. Overall, the school meets the government's floor standards which define minimum acceptable performance.

Since the last inspection, you and your colleagues have thought hard about ways to improve the performance of the school and have included a number of changes in the post-inspection action plan. Crucial to this success is that expectations of teachers and managers are raised. Your school improvement plan is very detailed and does address the main issues outlined in the inspection report. Timescales are reasonable, and those responsible are named. However the details of monitoring arrangements and in particular the precise role of governors sometimes lack details and targets. Actions are not prioritised.

I observed that in almost all Key Stage 2 classes the material being taught was at too low a level. Children were not being challenged sufficiently. When compared to assessment details, these were found to be largely accurate for aspects of literacy, but occasionally overgenerous in mathematics, especially at the higher levels. This means that for some pupils the school's view of the progress that they are making is inaccurate. At Key Stage 1, the level of challenge was sufficient, with accurate assessment reflecting this.

The school's lesson observation system is systematic and teachers' performance in class closely linked to their progression up the pay scale. However, the system does not always identify when children are not learning at a challenging enough level.

Governors have a reasonable understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The short time that has elapsed since the last inspection has not allowed decisive action however. Notes of governors' meetings are comprehensive, but discussions around the monitoring of the school's performance do not set sufficiently precise targets. Therefore it is difficult for progress towards them to be monitored effectively.

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 local authority has supported the school with paired lesson observations and training for aspects of governance, especially around monitoring and evaluation of school performance.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Seath  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**