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Mrs Caren Doodson
Headteacher
Bridgewater Primary School
Bridle Way
Billet Lane
Berkhamsted
HP4 1ES

Dear Mrs Doodson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bridgewater Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 February 2015, 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 November 2014. 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:

- develop a cohesive approach to the leadership of teaching in each subject area and make explicit the role of all school leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. I also met with three governors and spoke to a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I toured the school with you to observe teaching and learning. I also looked at pupils' work from across the school. I evaluated the school's action plan, looked at reports produced by governors and read emails sent to the school following a recent parents' forum.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection, two teachers have left the school and temporary appointments have been made to fill these posts.

Main findings

Senior leaders, including governors, have acted swiftly to address the issues identified as in need of improvement at the previous inspection. A comprehensive plan for improvement has been developed. This plan identifies key targets for improvement, clear success criteria and specifies when the impact of the actions described will be evaluated and by whom. It provides a good basis for leaders, including governors, to monitor the impact of the school's work in making the improvements necessary to be judged as good or outstanding at the next inspection.

Following a review of the use of the pupil premium you have improved systems for checking pupils' progress. Teachers are clearer about what is expected of them and how they will be held accountable for pupils' achievement. Support and training has also been provided for subject leaders in English and mathematics. This has helped middle leaders to develop a better understanding of their role in developing teaching and learning and checking on the impact of their work. However, the school has not yet established how the quality of pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics will be monitored and who will take responsibility for improving these subjects.

Governors are developing a better understanding of how the school operates on a day-to-day basis and their expertise is being used more effectively to secure improvements. Visits are now focused on key aspects of the school's work. For example, some governors have recently attended meetings at which senior leaders discussed pupils' achievement with class teachers. Following these meetings, governors produced reports along with suggestions about how the meetings could be more effective in future. Improvements have also been made to the way in which the governing body interacts with parents. Governors recently hosted a parents' forum at which the school's inspection outcome and plans for improvement were discussed. The governing body also produces a termly newsletter for parents, giving details of issues currently facing the school and how they are being addressed. Parents are appreciative of the improved communication.

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 has received good support from the local authority. Consultants have provided training and support for subject leaders and an adviser has supported the leadership team in developing improvement plans and ensuring that the focus

remains on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Since the inspection a local leader in education has also been supporting the headteacher and other school leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow
Her Majesty's Inspector

cc. Chair of the Governing Body
cc. Local authority