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9 June 2014

Joanna Cook
Headteacher
Paston Ridings Primary School
Paston Ridings
Peterborough
PE4 7XG

Dear Ms Cook

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Paston Ridings Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 6 June 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 February 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:

- improve the quality of teaching so that more able pupils are provided with work that challenges them.

Evidence

During the visit I held meetings with you, other senior leaders, four members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also evaluated the school's action plan and monitoring and assessment documentation. You accompanied me during visits to several classes in the school, where we observed teaching and looked at pupils' work.

Context

Six teachers have resigned since the inspection and are set to leave the school at the end of the summer term. The school has appointed replacement teachers for the vacant positions. In addition, the school is seeking replacements for three teaching assistants who are leaving the school.

Main findings

You have quickly identified the priorities for improvement and, together with your senior leadership team, have started to tackle the issues identified by the recent inspection. Your improvement plan is detailed and you are using it to measure the school's improvement effectively. This is most apparent in the changes that you have made to the way that reading is taught. Using the support of local authority advisers, teachers are now very focused on teaching the skills that pupils need in order to read well. Your monitoring of this change indicates that it is having a positive impact on standards of reading. It is clear that pupils value the new focus and many are enthusiastic about reading.

Your work to improve the quality of marking is providing pupils with a better understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers' marking is improving across the school. In some classes the quality of marking is high, as pupils respond to the comments and suggestions that their teachers are making by showing that they understand what to do next.

Your improvement plan rightly identifies that more able pupils are not challenged enough and do not make the progress that they are capable of. Teachers' plans to challenge and extend the learning of this group of pupils are not ambitious enough. This is an area that needs more work. Pupils of different abilities often have the same tasks to do and more able pupils only access additional work after completing the easier work. This means that it takes too long for these pupils to access the work that challenges them.

Your work to improve the accuracy of assessment is underway and teachers are developing a clearer understanding of how to gauge the level of a pupil's work. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved since the inspection but is not yet accurate enough to enable a smooth transition from the Reception classes into Year 1.

Senior leaders are building a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching through their monitoring activities. However, assessment data does not feature strongly enough in judging the quality of a teachers' work.

The governing body has arranged for an external review of their work to take place in late June 2014. It has recognised the need to challenge school leaders more. Members of the governing body have attended local authority training to improve

their understanding of school assessment data. The governing body has improved the way that it monitors the risk assessments that the school undertakes for visits, trips and in-school activities.

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 is providing an appropriate level of support and is contributing to the progress that the school is making. A literacy adviser has supported the school's work to improve reading and is monitoring the impact of this work. Another adviser is helping teachers to improve their assessment practice and a senior advisor is working with you to plan for further improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Christopher Moodie
Her Majesty's Inspector