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12 December 2013

Mrs Carol Jamison
Headteacher
Cottesmore Primary School
RAF Station, Kendrew Barracks
Cottesmore
LE15 7BA

Dear Mrs Jamison

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Cottesmore Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 11 December 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 October 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:

- increase the frequency and improve the accuracy of the systems in place for monitoring the quality of teaching, and ensure that all leaders' roles and responsibilities in this process are clear
- ensure that the support you receive from external sources, including other schools, is appropriately tailored to meet the particular improvement needs of the school.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher as well as with subject leaders and representatives from the governing body. I also met with the school's adviser from the local authority. These meetings were held to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I made short visits to each class and spoke

informally to some pupils about their work. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

Since the last inspection, one member of the teaching staff is on long-term sickness leave. A new parent governor has been appointed as have four new teaching assistants. At the time of this visit, an area of the school was unusable for health and safety reasons. This is in the hands of the local authority's property management department.

Main findings

School leaders have responded positively to the inspection findings and have acted swiftly to put in place more effective systems by which they can improve the quality of leadership and teaching in the school. The school improvement plan has appropriately challenging targets for the progress pupils should be making in reading, writing and mathematics. These have been broken down into termly milestones, by which governors can hold school leaders to account for the progress pupils make in their work. Alongside this, leaders have made improvements to how they monitor the quality of teaching. They now use a wider range of first-hand evidence in order to make judgements about how effective teaching is across the school. This includes talking to pupils and scrutinising their work, as well as tracking the progress they make over each term. However, these systems for monitoring the quality of teaching have not had enough impact on improving the school because they are too infrequent and are not sufficiently sharply focused on the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

Subject leaders have conducted an extensive review of teachers' assessments in writing and mathematics. From this, the school has a much more accurate picture of pupils' abilities and the gaps they have in their learning. However, there is little evidence to show that teachers are using this information to ensure they plan work for pupils that is closely matched to their ability levels. The action plans subject leaders have written lack precision. The local authority adviser is aware of this and has arranged to support these leaders in their role from January.

Governors have reviewed how they challenge school leaders and hold them to account for the progress pupils make. They are committed to improving the effectiveness of their monitoring role and, because of this, have scheduled additional opportunities for visiting classes and looking at pupils' work. The emotional wellbeing of pupils is of paramount importance to them. However, they know they need to balance this with a more informed analysis of the progress all pupils and groups of pupils make. Governors are aware that they would benefit from support in developing this aspect of their role and have brokered an external consultant to work with them over the next term.

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 deems the school to be of 'high priority' and has allocated an adviser to work with the leadership team to put in place an appropriate improvement plan. The local authority has rightly identified the need to co-ordinate the support for the school, and is arranging for a National Leader of Education to strengthen the capacity of school leaders to drive school improvement. Half-termly meetings will be held in order to closely monitor the progress the school is making until its next inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Philippa Darley
Her Majesty's Inspector