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Mrs Julia Dickson
Headteacher
Otley the Whartons Primary School
The Whartons
Otley
West Yorkshire
LS21 2BS

Dear Mrs Dickson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Otley the Whartons Primary School, Leeds

Following my visit to your school on 6 February 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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 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:

- ensure any identified gaps in performance between different groups of pupils are quickly narrowed
- monitor more closely the progress of groups of pupils with different starting points and the proportions who are on track to achieve a Level 6
- implement more efficient systems to analyse pupil data
- increase the proportion of outstanding teaching
- consider Ofsted good practice case studies to inform further development in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, another senior leader, representatives of the governing body, a group of staff and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also toured the school with a group of pupils. The school improvement plan was evaluated and a range of documentation was scrutinised.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection one part-time teacher has been appointed on a temporary contract. The working hours of another part-time teacher have been increased and subjects taught by two of the school's part-time teachers have been adjusted.

Main findings

You, your staff and governors are working together determinedly to tackle swiftly the areas for improvement identified. In part, this is because at the time of the inspection you had already identified where improvement was most urgent and work to tackle these areas had already begun. Staff have raised their expectations for pupils' progress and this is reflected in an increasing degree of challenge in their planning. Good practice in the use of individual pupil targets in Key Stage 1 has been extended across the school and teachers noted how this is helping pupils to address gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills more quickly. The marking policy has been reviewed and, as a result, pupils are being given clearer guidance about how to improve. The newly introduced 'target time' is ensuring they reflect and respond to teacher comments by making corrections or improving their work.

Staff say that opportunities for their professional development are valuable and are having a positive impact. Peer coaching, whole-school training and visits to observe good and outstanding practice elsewhere are making a strong contribution to improving their skills and confidence. This is resulting in better pupil progress and more effective behaviour management. Similarly, you and other leaders are making good use of expertise from within and beyond the school to make some quick improvements to outdoor provision within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Your team has clear plans in place for further substantial developments to ensure the quality of children's learning outdoors mirrors that of indoor provision. Adjustment to the deployment of teaching assistants has led to better use of their individual skills to support pupils' learning and the school's priorities for improvement. Similarly, changes to planning and teaching responsibilities in a class where the teaching is shared between two-part time teachers are supporting greater curriculum coherence and more rapid pupil progress. Checks to identify pupils who are not making the progress expected are more robust and this information is being used more effectively by teachers to adjust their teaching in class. A wider range of additional one-to-one and small group teaching is also being used to successfully accelerate pupils' progress.

The school's action plan and separate time-line set out clearly what is being done to address

each area for improvement. Milestones to ensure improvements are on track are included although some targets and success criteria are not sharp enough. You have rightly recognised the need to introduce quickly a system for tracking more efficiently the attainment and progress of all groups. The Joint Review Group, incorporating governors, your senior leaders and the school's improvement adviser is well placed to ensure the school's progress toward 'good' is monitored closely and actions adjusted if appropriate.

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

Your use of expertise across the local 'family of schools' and beyond is well-planned and very closely matched to the needs of the school and individual staff. Staff are seeing effective practice first-hand then working closely together to ensure consistency of approach back in school. Taught sessions for higher attaining pupils led by a local secondary school are helpful in providing additional challenge the most able. The school's improvement adviser is making a positive contribution to the monitoring and evaluation of progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli
Her Majesty's Inspector