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Mr Charlie Lindsay
Headteacher
Sandown Primary School
The Ridge
Hastings
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Dear Mr Lindsay

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sandown Primary School

Following my visit to your school on Wednesday 10 September 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 May 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:

- accelerate pupils' progress urgently in Year 6
- ensure all teachers' marking enables pupils to know immediately how to improve their work.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and other senior leaders, including the deputy headteacher, the inclusion manager and your subject leaders for English and mathematics. I also met with a representative of the local authority, members of your governing body, including the Chair, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement action plans, governing body minutes and a recent headteacher's report. We completed short visits to classrooms

together, during which we spoke to some pupils and staff and looked at work in pupils' books.

Context

Since the last inspection you have appointed a new leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage. You have also appointed four new teachers who started at the school in September. A number of newly appointed support staff provide speech and language support. The governing body has reconstituted.

Main findings

You and other leaders have responded effectively to the recommendations of the recent inspection report. Under your guidance, the senior leadership team has contributed to the school improvement plan, which shows clearly how the school plans to move forward. To enable governors to check progress the school is making, the timelines and monitoring, as set out in senior leader's plans, need to be part of the main improvement plan too.

Subject leaders for both the core and foundation subjects are implementing the new National Curriculum well. With external support from the local authority, they are developing the leadership skills they will need to improve teaching in their subjects.

You have used a range of approaches to improve the quality of teaching, for example the effective use of video to enable teachers to review their own practice after getting feedback from school leaders. Similarly, your organisation of three teachers to work across two classes provides more effective teaching and learning support, and continuity for staff and pupils.

Your governing body have responded positively to the recent inspection by commissioning an external review of governance and reconstituting themselves. They now have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

School leaders are improving teaching. During our short visits to classrooms we saw examples of teachers making better use of questioning to challenge pupils' thinking. For example, in a Key Stage 1 lesson a teacher read an imaginary letter to the children and asked if they could work out who it might be from. Pupils were successfully challenged to use reasoning and deduction, and worked out it was from Paddington Bear. This led to the pupils working through problems to help Paddington use money to make different totals. We agreed that there is still more work to be done to ensure that teachers use every opportunity to stretch pupils' thinking further.

Expectations from all staff appeared high in all of the lessons that we saw. Pupils responded well to the demands made of them. Staff now follow the new marking policy more closely but their written feedback is not always clear enough to help pupils know what they need to do next. For example, in several of the books we looked through, feedback was often brief and sometimes only a single word. As we discussed, this would be difficult for pupils to use to help them improve their work.

The improvements you have made to teaching are also beginning to have an impact on the achievement of pupils. Attainment in all areas continues to rise. In the 2014 Key Stage 1 assessments, pupils achieved in line with national averages. The progress made by pupils between Key Stage 1 and 2 improved and is now in line with national averages in all subjects apart from reading. There is still much more improvement needed, however, especially for the pupils who are currently in Year 6. It is also important that you continue to narrow the gap between those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, and those who are not.

We saw pupils behaving very well in and around the school. They were keen to share their work with you and enjoyed greeting you using new French phrases they had recently learnt.

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 made good use of external support, for example to complete a review of governance and to develop the role of subject leaders at the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Barnes

Seconded Inspector