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Miss Rebecca Workman
Headteacher
Eastbury Farm Primary School
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Dear Miss Workman

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Eastbury Farm Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 12 March 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring 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 monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- increase the proportion of boys who attain greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, the subject leaders for English, mathematics, science, geography and history, and a group of teaching assistants. Additionally, I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body, and the school's local authority improvement adviser. The focus of these meetings was to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated, as were several other action plans. I visited most classes, reviewed pupils' work and scrutinised a range of documents relating to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and local

authority visit reports. I spoke informally to a number of pupils in classrooms about their learning and met more formally with a group of pupils to talk about their school experience. I also spoke with several parents at the beginning of the school day.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection in November 2016, there have been changes in the leadership of the school. The previous headteacher left in December 2016 and you joined the school as headteacher in January 2017. The chair of the governing body became a governor in March 2017 and took on the role of chair in September 2017. Most of the governors were appointed after the previous inspection. The staff team has largely remained the same, nine of the 12 current teachers were in post at the time of the previous inspection.

Main findings

Governors and staff in the school share your high expectations and commitment to providing the best quality of education for pupils. You have acted quickly to tackle the areas that were identified for improvement at the previous inspection. You are leading improvements effectively with the support of your able deputy headteacher and a highly committed staff team. You and your leaders have constructed precise development plans which identify the correct priorities for improvement. These plans are checked regularly against clear milestones so that governors and leaders measuring for success are able to do so accurately. This sharp and focused approach has been effective in bringing about rapid improvements to the school, particularly to the quality of teaching and, subsequently, pupils' outcomes.

Parents are very pleased with the school under your leadership. The parents I met with during my visit talked about 'the major improvements in all areas of the school' since your arrival. Parents described the 'real passion' of the staff team and the 'amazing environment' that you and your staff have created for pupils.

Subject leadership has developed rapidly within the school. Subject leaders are positive about the changes that are taking place and they contribute to school improvement effectively. Subject leaders' action plans for their individual subjects are based on the wide range of monitoring activities, such as observing lessons, scrutinising teachers' plans, talking to pupils and looking at pupils' workbooks. The actions identify clear next steps for further development. Subject leaders provide training and support so that teachers are confident to plan and teach all areas of the curriculum. Consequently, pupils are now being given many opportunities to use and apply their knowledge and skills across all subjects.

Your deputy headteacher has successfully galvanised a team of committed teaching assistants who are deployed well across the school. Teaching assistants receive appropriate training to improve their practice. They show an increasing level of skill that they apply effectively to support pupils to do the best that they can. They also work more successfully with teachers because they regularly share information on

how well pupils are performing. The group of teaching assistants I met with appreciate the professional development that they receive. They told me that they feel valued, there is a good team spirit at the school and senior leaders are approachable and very helpful. One teaching assistant expressed the view of the group by commenting: 'I enjoy my job much more now because I know I am making a difference.' As a result, teaching assistants' work now contributes effectively to the increasing progress that pupils make.

Importantly, you have improved the system for assessing and recording pupils' achievements across all subjects. Teachers have received training in how to assess pupils' progress accurately. This has enabled them to evaluate where their pupils are, and plan future learning based on what pupils already know and can do. You have wisely built in regular opportunities for teachers to check that their judgements are accurate, both with colleagues in the school and working with other local schools. Consequently, the quality of teaching is rapidly improving. Teachers are now in a stronger position to tailor provision to meet the needs of different groups of pupils in all subjects than they were at the previous inspection.

Standards across the school are rising. In 2017 the published results at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 show that the proportions of pupils overall who attained the expected standards and greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics were above the national averages. The Year 2 to Year 6 progress scores were also above the national averages in all of these subjects. Pupils' current workbooks evidence strong rates of progress for most pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Although this is a positive and clear improvement on pupils' previous achievements, you know that there is still work to do so that more boys attain a greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. You have rightly prioritised this in your improvement plans to ensure that boys always achieve the best they can.

Reflecting on changes since November 2016, pupils spoke enthusiastically about how you make sure they have 'the best possible learning'. Pupils said that they enjoy their lessons because they are 'fun' and 'we all get challenging work'. They told me: 'The teachers are kind and the teaching assistants are really helpful too. They swap around so we all get help.' Pupils like how they now record all their writing from different subjects in a single writing book. They told me: 'It's better because we can see more clearly how our writing is getting better in all our learning,' and 'it makes all our writing the best'. Pupils were proud to show me the work in their books which demonstrates clear progress.

Governors are highly committed to the school's improvement and, under the strong direction of the chair of the governing body, have quickly developed their skills in order to give you and your leaders the high-quality support and challenge that they should. The thorough induction process for new governors ensures that the high expectations are clearly understood so governors' work remains effective.

The external review of governance, following the previous inspection, was very helpful in identifying what needed to improve. Governors appreciated the clear steer the review provided. They conducted a skills audit to check that across the governing body they have a wide set of strengths and expertise. The training they have received, and that which they have organised themselves, has increased governors' knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Through your detailed reports for governors, their joint monitoring with subject leaders and their own focused visits linked to the school's priorities, governors have rapidly developed a clear and accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The minutes of recent governing body meetings demonstrate that governors hold you and your leaders stringently to account for the school's continued improvement.

Governors have improved the way they engage with parents and carers, including through their termly newsletter that informs parents of the work of governing body and the difference it makes to the school's improvement. Governors attend both formal and informal school events regularly. On these occasions they make sure that they are available to meet and speak with parents. Parents appreciate the way that governors have sought to make themselves known to the community and share the work they do to improve the school. Parents told me that the governors are 'enthusiastic', 'very approachable' and 'much more visible' around the school. Parents stated that they feel governance at the school has 'massively improved' since the previous inspection.

External support

The local authority is providing effective support. The local authority responded quickly to the findings of the previous inspection by increasing its level of support to the school. Local authority consultants have been deployed to support staff and the improvement partner makes regular visits to check on progress and to challenge you and your governors on the impact of your leadership.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hertfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Webb
Her Majesty's Inspector