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27 November 2012

Chloe Langson  
Headteacher  
Uphill Primary School  
Old Church Road  
Weston-Super-Mare  
BS23 4XH

Dear Miss Langson

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Uphill Primary School, North Somerset**

Following my visit to your school on 27 November 2012, 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 September 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, English and mathematics subject leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated, and documentation about performance management was discussed. The headteacher took the HMI on a tour of the school to look at teaching and learning of phonics (the sounds letters make) and pupils' work in English.

### **Context**

Since the inspection Year 3 and Year 4 are now taught in ability groups for mathematics, and Year 5 and Year 6 continue to be taught in ability groups for the subject.

## **Main findings**

The headteacher is tackling weaknesses in teaching in a concerted way. Since the inspection, she has invested time in observing teaching and staff training, and these actions are refining teachers' skills. Targets are also set for teachers to make them more accountable for the progress their pupils make. The focus on phonics teaching means that there is now a whole school approach to teaching the sounds letters make. Subject leaders have been quick to 'step up to the mark' by helping teachers produce lesson plans to better suit pupils' different abilities, for example in mathematics. English and mathematics leaders now check teachers' marking of pupils' work regularly. This is followed through by giving teachers examples of marking comments which are appropriate for the age of pupils in their classes.

The school's development plan focuses strongly on improving teaching, but is not precise enough about which aspects of teaching, such as, how best to teach methods of calculation in mathematics. Governors are hugely supportive of the work the school does. They also challenge senior leaders to explain how actions taken, such as staff training, are improving teaching.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- tweak the school development plan to include and evaluate activities where teachers share their strengths, such as how they use different resources in mathematics lessons to help pupils' learn
- add into the school development plan which aspects of teaching need improving, such as teaching calculation in mathematics, as this will help senior leaders and governors judge whether actions taken have been successful in improving teaching and raising pupils' attainment.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

## **External support**

The school draws effectively on support from the local authority. Support for the teaching of phonics has built teachers' confidence in teaching these lessons. The headteacher is receiving training to develop her leadership role and now checks and feeds back on the quality of teaching and learning more thoroughly. The local authority has increased support for the school and reviews with the headteacher and governors whether actions taken are improving the quality of education.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for North Somerset and as below.

Yours sincerely

Jane Neech

**Her Majesty's Inspector**