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20 February 2013

Mr Grahame Chambers  
Headteacher  
Scarning Voluntary Controlled Primary School  
Dereham Road  
Scarning  
Dereham  
Norfolk  
NR19 2PW

Dear Mr Chambers

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Scarning Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 February 2013, 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 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

#### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher, subject leaders for English and mathematics, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a staff governor, and the school's local authority Achievement and Intervention Advisor. The Senior Advisor for Improvement and Development attended the feedback at the end of the day. The school action plan and governing body action plan were evaluated. A brief visit was made to each classroom.

#### **Context**

At the time of the inspection in November, the headteacher of Mattishall Primary School was supporting the school during the temporary absence of the headteacher. The headteacher is now back in school and links with the local school continue, including some joint training for staff.

## **Main findings**

Senior staff and the governing body believe the inspection report to be a true reflection of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and took swift action to address the areas that need improvement. In particular, leaders recognise two important things as central to further improvement. First, staff must be consistent in their planning and approach to pupils' learning. Discussions amongst staff resulted in agreement on non-negotiables in the planning and delivery of lessons, and in the marking of pupils' work. The leader for mathematics has worked with staff to develop a policy to provide pupils with a consistent approach to learning methods of calculation. The policy will be implemented within the next few weeks. Second, staff at all levels of responsibility must be held accountable for pupils' progress. The headteacher and senior staff accept that they have not been used to being challenged in the past, and that they have not provided sufficient challenge to others. Although uncomfortable at times, the headteacher and governors report that greater accountability and challenge are welcomed by teachers and senior staff. To make sure that teachers have the information that they need about pupils' progress, assessment arrangements have been tightened up and training provided. The governors took immediate action to make sure that they know more about pupils' performance. They have a new Strategic Committee. They have been trained by local authority advisors to interpret national data and have already used what they have learned to ask some searching questions of the headteacher.

The governing body has an action plan, sensibly based on an audit of their skills, in tandem with the school's most important priorities. The school's action plan addresses the priorities appropriately but needs smartening up. It is not clear who is responsible for taking actions, who checks what is happening or who decides whether the results are good enough. Although pupils' targets are based on what they must achieve for progress to be good, the plan does not use these targets to measure success clearly enough.

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 recommends that further action is taken to:

- sharpen the school action plan by clarifying the roles of staff, and using pupils' targets to measure the success of the planned actions.

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

## **External support**

The work of the local authority advisor and the collaboration with a local school are well set up to provide challenge and, importantly, to make sure that the ownership of actions and improvements sits firmly with the headteacher and governors at

Scarning. The support is welcomed and is helping the school to focus on what it takes for pupils to achieve good progress and high standards. Training for staff has been well-targeted and prompt. As a result, staff are up for the challenge and already making changes or debating how to modify current practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**