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28 February 2013

Penny Brown  
Sinfin Primary School  
Sheridan Street  
Sinfin  
Derby  
DE24 9HG

Dear Ms Brown

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

Following my visit to your school on 28 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 December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

#### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and the deputy head teacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and a group of pupils. The school action plan was evaluated and a tour of the school undertaken.

#### **Context**

Since the inspection in December 2012, one teaching assistant has taken maternity leave and one teacher has been on long-term sick leave. Two newly qualified teachers and another teacher are currently working at the school on temporary contracts. Agreement has been reached about the federation of the school with nearby Ashcroft Primary School, and the interim headteacher is now the executive headteacher of both schools. A core group of governors will shortly meet to plan for the bringing together of both existing governing bodies into one new, joint

governing body. Agreement has been reached on a re-branding of the school, to include a new name and different uniform.

## **Main findings**

There is a very clear sense within the school and from all those spoken with, that the school is making rapid progress in many areas. The new rigour in lesson observations and professional development has helped to improve learning. All teaching and support staff have an individual programme of professional development. Leaders and governors are clear about the direction that the school is now taking. Development planning is ambitious and dynamic, but has evolved over recent months and consequently lacks a coherent overview. It also has insufficient measurable milestones, so that progress in implementing the plan is difficult to assess.

Pupils report that their lessons are now more interesting and challenging. Behaviour has improved both in and out of lessons. There is very positive evidence of improved levels of attainment at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils making expected progress, although still well below national averages, is predicted by the school to be significantly better in 2013 than in 2012.

Good progress has also been made in developing the roles and confidence of leaders at all levels, including the deputy headteacher and the new Chair of Governors. Marking has improved and most pupils are now clear about their levels of attainment and targets for progress. Some children are able to talk positively about the 'next steps' and 'challenge' set by teachers when their work is handed back after marking.

Some progress, particularly in developing the quality of the early-years provision, has been held back by staff absence. Although staff attitudes generally are changing, not all staff are yet sufficiently ambitious for the progress of the children that they teach. Similarly although parents receive current attainment grades, the way in which these relate to the progress that their children are making, is not sufficiently well explained.

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:

- rewrite the development plan with a clear strategic overview that includes all elements for the short and medium term
- break down the elements of the development plan into more specific, measurable steps, so that it is easier to identify when progress has been made

- ensure that the arrangements for governance of the new federation are quickly made, so that work can begin to ensure that it becomes highly effective across both schools
- improve the communication of progress and targets to parents and children, so that they can become more ambitious and actively involved in improving learning.

HMI will provide additional support by offering to work with the headteacher in rewriting the development plan and in preparing some training and development activities for the new governing body.

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

### **External support**

The school has made good use of the support provided by the local authority, particularly through their appointment of the executive headteacher. Other aspects of the local authority support, such as the brokering of additional consultancy time and providing support from specialist services such as human resources, has been effective and well received.

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

Yours sincerely

John Peckham  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**