

## PROTECT-INSPECTION



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19 April 2013

Mrs Jenn Phelps  
Headteacher  
Roebuck Primary School and Nursery  
St Margarets  
Stevenage  
SG2 8RG

Dear Mrs Phelps

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

Following my visit to your school on 18 April 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 on 5 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you and other senior leaders, four members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and 10 pupils from Years 5 and 6. I evaluated the school action plan. I also visited every class briefly with you, and scrutinised the school's records of recruitment checks on staff.

### **Context**

You are due to retire at the end of August 2013, and members of the governing body are actively seeking a new headteacher for the start of September 2013.

**Main findings**

You responded quickly to the areas for improvement identified in the recent section 5 inspection by producing a detailed action plan. The aim of the plan is clear, but what you intend to achieve is not always set out precisely enough for the person responsible to be held to account. The timescale for the plan is relatively short and as you are soon to retire, you will realistically need to consider actions for your successor beyond the summer term to secure a 'good' school.

You and your senior leaders have taken decisive action to raise standards by establishing a list of 'non-negotiables' for teachers aimed at raising attainment and accelerating progress and improving teaching. Pupils told me that they have more time to write in lessons and that teachers are expecting higher standards of handwriting in their books. Teachers are providing 'draft' workbooks to help pupils remember key points from lessons.

Members of the governing body have revised the Governor Visit policy to make their visits to classrooms more useful. They have responded positively to their role in monitoring the impact of how the Pupil Premium is spent in the school by nominating two governors to evaluate the difference this funding is making. They now have a sharper understanding of how this funding is improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

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:

- extend the current action plan to cover the autumn term for the academic year 2013-2014
- ensure that ways of judging the success of the plan are fully measurable wherever possible.

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

**External support**

The local authority is keen for school leaders and governors to drive their own improvement, but has offered support in key areas to secure a 'good' judgement sooner rather than later. Local authority advisors in English and mathematics have worked well with some teachers to improve their planning of lessons and the Hertfordshire Improvement Partner has recommended outstanding practitioners in other local schools for teachers to observe in order to encourage the sharing of good practice. The local authority is also working productively with the governing body in recruiting a new headteacher of high calibre. Governors are aware that a successful

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appointment is crucial in order to sustain existing improvements and move the school from 'requires improvement' to 'good' as quickly as possible.

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

Yours sincerely

John Daniell  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – (including where a school is an academy)
- the academy chain where relevant
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.
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