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20 April 2012

Sophie Good  
Abbeys Primary School  
Melrose Avenue  
Milton Keynes  
MK3 6PS

Dear Mrs Good

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Abbeys Primary School, Milton Keynes Local Authority**

Following my visit to your school on 17 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.

This visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2013

**Evidence**

During the visit I met with you as headteacher, the school's subject leaders of English and mathematics, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I evaluated the school's improvement planning. We walked around all classrooms and discussed new structures and plans for September 2013.

**Context**

You arrived as headteacher just over one week before your recent inspection in January. Before this, there was a period where the school was led by an interim headteacher. There are several vacancies in the senior leadership team. The governors are hoping to appoint a new phase leader, a special educational needs coordinator and a deputy headteacher for September.

**Main findings**

You have rightly spent the first few months of your headship getting to grips with the most urgent issues that need to be tackled. You have organised the school's tracking data so it shows unambiguously where underachievement exists. You have used this information, your observations around school and the findings of the recent Ofsted inspection to identify where teaching and the curriculum need to improve.

Your improvement plans focus on immediate actions that begin to tackle identified areas for improvement. These plans show what impact is anticipated immediately and by the end of this academic year. While this provides a useful start to your school improvement, you will find it useful to plan over a longer timescale so you show exactly how you intend to be a good or better school in two years. This will also help you keep an eye on your long term goals when making decisions about, for example, staffing and resources.

Plans to develop leadership are secure. At the moment, many leadership tasks are completed by you and, as headteacher, you will not have the time to fulfil all the roles you have. You sensibly plan to develop the phase leader role so they become more responsible for the collection and analysis of attainment and progress data. At the moment phase leaders and subject leaders do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils should achieve and they will benefit from the extra support and training you have planned for them.

Governors have become more confident in their ability to challenge the school's leadership team. They have a good understanding of what they need to do to fulfil their duties. I was interested to hear about how they have developed from a governing body who would accept what they were being told to being one that is more inclined to challenge and seek evidence to support senior leaders' assertions. It is encouraging to see that governors are asking for information to be presented in a format that allows them to see how well different groups are performing. This is a good example of them being more proactive in holding the school to account as it will help them monitor pupils' achievement and the impact of pupil premium spending more carefully.

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

- appoint high calibre candidates to the vacant leadership posts and make sure they have clearly defined roles so they start to have an impact quickly
- develop the action plan so it shows clear milestones over the next two years, with an expectation that the actions taken will lead to the school being judged to be at least good by its next inspection.

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

**External support**

The local authority is supporting you and the governors in making key appointments. They have provided support and guidance to the newly qualified teachers. Consultants have worked alongside some teachers to improve performance.

The school have secured funding to work in partnership with other schools in developing, amongst other things, the quality of teaching.

The school has also employed external consultants to work with teachers in developing the teaching of phonics, spelling and reading. This is a sensible investment because the teaching of these aspects is not always good enough.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Sheridan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**