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2 May 2013

Kay Potter  
St Helen's Primary School  
Colne Road  
Bluntisham  
Huntingdon  
PE28 3NY

Dear Mrs Potter

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Helen's Primary School, Bluntisham.**

Following my visit to your school on 30 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 in February 2012.

#### **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with yourself and your deputy headteacher. I met the local authority adviser for your school and representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. I evaluated your post-Ofsted action plan and read a range of documentation, such as minutes of governing body meetings and outcomes of your monitoring activities and those of the local authority. We carried out brief visits to lessons.

#### **Context**

There have been no significant changes to the school's context since the inspection.

#### **Main findings**

School leaders are not yet demonstrating the urgent need for improvement to become a good school. You have constructed a post-Ofsted action plan, but the intended improvements to standards and the quality of teaching are not sufficiently clear. Your own evaluation of teaching shows that much remains to be achieved. Your own feedback to staff following lesson observations and work scrutiny is unlikely to improve teaching to good and from good to outstanding because it is not sufficiently challenging to raise expectations. It does not indicate to teachers what

they should do differently to accelerate pupils' progress, although I saw some good practice in developing writing in history and science.

Staff, including teaching assistants, are going to a variety of training events, but the professional development of staff is not brought together in a coherent plan. It is therefore difficult for your governors to evaluate the effectiveness of the training and draw conclusions on the value for money you are getting from the budget allocated. Work to visit outstanding schools has been slow to start.

Governors are highly committed but some actions, such as setting up a post-Ofsted group to review progress made on the key issues identified at the inspection, are slow to start. You provide governors with quantitative data on pupils' progress but limited information on improvement to the quality of teaching and learning. This curtails governors' ability to hold the school to account. A review of governance is imminent.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, I recommend that further action is taken to:

- Improve the action plan by setting targets for outstanding teaching and for the proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress
- provide governors with a broader range of information so that they can evaluate progress without delay and independently from your senior team
- ensure that development points following your monitoring of teaching including work scrutiny and lesson observations, are precise and quickly put into practice
- draw up a coherent plan for staff professional development, including using existing good practice from Ofsted's publications and visiting effective schools to bring about improvement more rapidly.

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

### **External support**

The local authority support is highly intensive. An adviser works two days per week in your school to improve teaching and learning. There are signs of overreliance on this help and a risk of the school not developing its leadership capacity to become good. An exit strategy to clarify when the school will be self-sustaining is required. The primary improvement adviser offers good advice and challenge.

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

Yours sincerely

Marianick Ellender-Gelé  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**