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7 May 2013

Mrs S Thornton  
Headteacher  
Siskin Infant and Nursery School  
Nimrod Drive  
Rowner  
Gosport  
PO13 8AA

Dear Mrs Thornton

## **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Siskin Infant and Nursery School**

Following my visit to your school on 7 May 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, two members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated. The inspector accompanied the headteacher on a walk around the school.

### **Context**

Since the inspection the school has occupied part of the new buildings which have been erected on the site. There have also been extensive alterations in the Nursery and Reception classes to create an environment which is more suitable for learning.

## **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

The executive headteacher took up her position at Siskin Infant and Nursery School in September 2012. She quickly established that significant and rapid actions were needed to improve the quality of teaching and to raise overall standards and progress. At the time of the inspection in February 2013, although the school was judged to have serious weaknesses, the headteacher had already begun to make changes. However, the full effect and impact of these changes were not then evident.

Since the inspection, the headteacher and senior leadership team have continued to give their attention to improving the quality of teaching and ensuring pupils learn effectively. The headteacher has given direction to the work of the school. The action plans, written after the inspection, directly deal with the issues identified in the report. The plans are updated regularly and they have given the school a sense of purpose and confidence that it can succeed. The pace of change has quickened and the impact of the actions taken is now becoming more apparent.

Very clear expectations have been set about the quality of planning and teaching which is required. Extensive support has been provided to all teachers to help them improve, and weaker teachers have been given training and coaching to support their development. The school has wisely drawn on the expertise available from the neighbouring junior school in the federation and from a local teaching school alliance. Revised policies have been introduced and a new reading and writing scheme has already begun to help pupils make better progress. Work is currently in hand to alter the roles and responsibilities of learning support assistants so that they can help pupils and support learning more effectively.

The changes to the building, especially in the nursery, mean that the environment is better suited for pupils of this age. Visits have been made to outstanding nurseries so that the staff can see excellent practice and learn from it. Pupils' progress is carefully checked and there is a much sharper emphasis on quickly providing extra support for children who need it. A new scheme to work closely with families, in order to improve attendance and pupil progress, supported by Barnardo's and the local borough council, has also begun to have a positive effect.

The headteacher and senior leadership team check the work in lessons by visiting classes frequently. Teachers are held to account for their work and there is a steely determination that children should be given the best possible help and teaching.

The governing body is fully involved in the school's plans for improvement. It is very aware of what has to be done and has taken decisive action to improve its own skills. It has had training in how to review the work of the school and has devised a well-constructed plan to follow this through. Further training in understanding data is

planned. Its commissioning of an external review to consider its own effectiveness is evidence of its determination to improve the school.

The local authority has worked with the school to develop a statement of action which provides strong support. It includes consultancy from specialist advisers, as well as regular visits by the principal inspector to evaluate the impact of the actions taken. It provides a good basis from which to build.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Marcia Headon  
**Additional Inspector**