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15 May 2013

Mr Martin Clinton  
Executive headteacher  
Istead Rise Primary School  
Downs Road  
Gravesend  
DA13 9HG

Dear Mr Clinton

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Istead Rise Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 14 May 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2013.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with senior leaders, three members of the governing body, including the Chair, and two representatives of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's training and monitoring plan were evaluated.

### **Context**

The headteacher is absent and the local authority has commissioned leadership support from, and brokered a partnership with, a nearby school, Meopham Community Academy. The Principal and Deputy Principal of Meopham are now leading at Istead Rise. This arrangement is very recent and has only been in place for just over a fortnight.

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

The new leadership team have only been in the school for a short time, but have already brought greater clarity about what needs to be done. They are conducting a

full evaluation of pupils' and adults' knowledge and skills to provide an accurate base line from which progress can be measured. The leadership skills and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders are also currently under review. As a result of the recent leadership changes, there is no detailed school post-Ofsted action plan covering the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.

A local authority improvement advisor is working alongside the school's assistant headteacher to improve the quality of teaching. Teachers and teaching assistants have benefited from a series of well-planned training sessions. These have been followed up to make sure that agreed improvements can be seen in practice in the classrooms. The monitoring records show that teaching is beginning to improve; however, it is not possible to see if the improvements are making a significant difference to the quality of pupils' learning. This is because the information that the school has about how well pupils learn is not reliable.

The local authority's statement of action does not extend beyond July 2013, which is not sufficient time for the school to make the improvements needed. There is no mention of mathematics, although this is an area requiring improvement. Termly meetings are part of the local authority's arrangements to monitor the progress the school is making but have not taken place yet. The local authority has strengthened leadership by brokering a partnership with Meopham Community Academy and is providing regular advisory support to improve teaching. It is currently reviewing the effectiveness of the governing body, which has not been functioning effectively for some time.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority statement of action is not fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**