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21 May 2013

Cheryl Woolf  
Headteacher  
Friars Primary School and Nursery  
Constable Way  
Shoeburyness  
Southend-on-Sea  
SS3 9XX

Dear Mrs Woolf

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Friars Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 21 May 2013 I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit there were meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, senior leaders and subject leaders, governors, pupils and an officer from the local authority. The school's action plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed, including the most recent information on pupil achievement and feedback to teachers following lesson observations. A number of lessons were visited.

### **Context**

The governors of both Friars Primary and West Leigh Junior School, an outstanding school, are in favour of the two schools forming a hard federation. Consultations about federation are at an advanced stage.

### **Main findings**

School leaders are successfully putting in place their post-inspection action plan. The plan covers appropriately the areas requiring improvement identified at the previous inspection.

There are signs that teaching is improving. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children now have good opportunities to learn through play and exploration. Recent assessments, checked by the local authority, show children in the Reception classes are achieving higher than in the past. In other year groups, training for staff on reading, questioning and marking is improving the quality of teaching. For example, pupils in some of the classes visited rose to the challenge of explaining their reasoning when giving answers. Others are responding thoughtfully to tasks set for them in written feedback. School leaders observe teaching regularly. Their feedback following observations is very helpful. It is driving better teaching because it includes excellent advice to help teachers become more effective.

Behaviour is also improving. Disruption in lessons is rarer because lessons now are more interesting. When issues arise the school provides one-to-one support and works closely with families. These strategies are helping individual pupils manage their behaviour more successfully.

Subject leaders have a better understanding of what they need to do to improve teaching and pupil achievement. For example, they have discovered that some teachers have weak subject knowledge and would benefit from effective training and guidance. Currently ways of holding subject leaders to account for their work do not focus precisely enough on the impact of their roles on teaching and achievement.

The governing body has increased its effectiveness. Training has helped governors be clearer about the questions they have to ask and the evidence they need to gather to check how well the school is doing. This puts them in a stronger position to fulfil their responsibilities.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- provide training and guidance that equips all teachers with the knowledge required to teach all subjects well
- ensure subject leaders report on the impact of their work on teaching and achievement.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority works closely with the school. It has brokered a very successful partnership with an outstanding school and is currently managing the process that

may to lead to the federation of Friars Primary with West Leigh Junior School. This partnership is improving teaching and leadership throughout the school. The support of a local infant headteacher has helped raise the quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Southend-on-Sea and as below.

Yours sincerely

Anthony O'Malley

**Her Majesty's Inspector**