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19 June 2013

Mrs Carol Brammer  
Headteacher  
Richard Lee Primary School  
The Drive  
Wyken  
Coventry  
CV2 5FU

Dear Mrs Brammer

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Richard Lee Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 18 June 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 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors. A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority. I made brief visits to lessons, talked to a few pupils and looked at a small sample of pupils' work. I also evaluated the school improvement plans. The inspection findings were fed back to senior staff and governors at a meeting of the governing body.

### **Context**

Three teachers will leave the school at the end of this term. A second deputy headteacher, a senior teacher with responsibility for leading Key Stage 1 and mathematics, three newly qualified teachers and a learning support teacher for mathematics have been appointed and will start in September of this year. Work on the new school building will start next term.

## **Main findings**

Your commitment to raising achievement and improving pupils' life-chances is shown through your determination to drive forward the initiatives you started prior to the last full inspection. The improvements made to the tracking of pupils' progress are now giving you, the governors and teachers a much better knowledge of pupils' achievement throughout the school. This is allowing you and the teachers to ensure that the work given to pupils in lessons and small groups is more closely matched to their abilities. The current data show that attainment remains below average, and standards in writing are low. In the books that I looked at during the inspection, I can confirm that this is accurate. The data show that pupils' progress is beginning to accelerate in some year groups. Again, this accelerated progress is evident in pupils' books. However, you are aware that some of the previous data are likely to be inaccurate and, therefore, may not give you an exact evaluation of pupils' progress over time. It is essential that you and other leaders continue to monitor the accuracy of teachers' assessments so that all the school's leaders, teachers and governors have a true picture of pupils' achievement.

Your monitoring shows that teaching is improving, but is not yet consistently good. You know where teaching requires most improvement and you are providing individualised training and mentoring. This support must start to make a significant difference soon so that all pupils receive the good quality teaching to which they are entitled. There are some very good examples of the school's new marking policy in practice. Many pupils are now receiving good advice how to improve their work. In some classes, the presentation of pupils' work in books is poor. Untidy handwriting, 'dog-eared' books, messy crossings-out are too common.

The quality of leadership and management continues to improve. The deputy headteacher has greatly improved her knowledge and understanding of achievement data and how this information can be used to raise standards. The seconded deputy headteacher has made a significant contribution to improving mathematics provision across the school and developing the skills of the middle leaders. The middle leaders are much more aware that they have a major role in improving the school. Their plans for improvement show in detail the intended actions to improve provision in their subject responsibility or area of the school. I was impressed with their commitment and enthusiasm to improve the school and develop their own leadership skills. It is important that you ensure that leaders at all levels fully develop their skills of monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. The new appointments and the reorganisation of leadership responsibilities are set to add even more strength to the school's leadership. The release of the literacy leader from her class teaching duties to provide additional support for literacy across the school should mean that teaching improves and standards rise. It is essential that you and the governors regularly monitor the impact of this initiative and the new appointments on raising achievement.

The governors show a much improved awareness of their role in supporting the school and providing challenge to the school's leaders. The questions I put to the governors, especially about the use of data to show pupils' achievement, were answered accurately and with authority. The governors have many ideas how to continue to improve their monitoring of the work of the school and must implement these as soon as possible. The review of governance suggested at the last full inspection is not due to be undertaken until October. This is too long to wait. The governors should look to ensure that this review is completed at a much earlier date.

The improvement plans are in place and are being acted upon. However, although they are detailed, they are not focused sharply enough on the areas recommended for improvement at the last inspection and they do not have regular short-term checks. This means that you, other leaders and the governing body cannot be sure that all groups of pupils are making consistently good progress. Attendance is improving, but is still likely to be below average by the end of the school year.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Without detracting from the main drives to improve attendance and ensure that teaching is consistently good or better, the school should take further action to ensure that:

- the improvement plans are focused sharply on the areas recommended for improvement at the last inspection and have regular short-term checks
- the quality of the presentation of pupils' work in books is consistently good.

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

As agreed, I will contact your preferred external agency responsible for carrying out the review of governance with a view to an earlier completion.

### **External support**

You and other leaders state that you continue to be pleased with local authority support, especially through the work of the Early Years Foundation Stage consultant. All leaders speak very highly of the links with other local schools and describe the benefits of sharing ideas and observing good and outstanding practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**