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11 June 2013

Mrs Kathryn Maggs  
Headteacher  
Longton Lane Community Primary School  
Longton Lane  
Rainhill  
Prescot  
Merseyside  
L35 8PB

Dear Mrs Maggs

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Longton Lane Community Primary School, St. Helens**

Following my visit to your school on 10 June 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. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you, other senior leaders, six Year 6 pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions being taken to improve the school. I scrutinised a range of documents including teachers' planning, pupils' progress information and the school's operational plan. I also looked at the outcomes of leadership monitoring activities.

**Context**

Since the inspection the subject leader for English has returned to the school and a supply teacher has left. The Year 3 teacher is due to retire at the end of the summer term and the school is in the process of recruiting a replacement.

## Main findings

Systems for checking on teaching and pupil progress have been strengthened. Weekly checks on teachers' planning show more regular activities in writing and problem-solving; and teachers' using progress information to match work to pupils' different needs. Frequent checks of pupils' workbooks show pupils writing more and across different subjects, using basic skills in mathematics to solve problems, and improvements in presentation and handwriting. Several teachers have visited schools to observe outstanding practice. Feedback from lesson observations tells teachers what they need to do to improve practice but this could be linked more clearly to what is needed to become consistently good. A whole-school focus on teachers' marking has led to precise improvements in the feedback pupils receive, including spelling. Phonics (letters and sounds) sessions have been re-organised so that pupils are learning at a quicker pace and starting to use this new learning in writing and reading activities. There is scope for these sessions to be even more directly linked to pupils' specific skills.

Senior leaders and governors, with the support of the local authority, swiftly adapted the existing 'raising attainment plan' to tackle the key recommendations arising from the March inspection. The plan is purposeful, sits within the school's improvement plan and reflects what action is needed to improve the school in a short time. The new improvement plan will set the course for the school to become good.

Pupil progress information has been used to review the provision for pupils who need extra help. Teaching assistant support is more exactly matched to the needs of groups or individual pupils. Subject leaders are more involved in checking teaching and learning in their subjects and the return of the English leader has added significantly to the leadership of this subject.

Governors are ambitious and resolute in their determination to improve the school and continue to support and challenge the leadership. They know the school well as they visit regularly to check on teaching and learning, listen to the views of parents, and have established an executive group to keep a close eye on the school's progress. To enhance their contribution to the improvement of the school, governors have started work towards the 'governor mark' award.

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:

- rapidly develop the new school improvement plan so that it sets out the journey the school will take to become good
- ensure measures to gauge success are precisely linked to pupil outcomes
- build in specific indicators of progress so that staff and governors know what, and by when, has to be achieved so they can plot progress to good
- when completed, submit this plan to me
- ensure feedback to teachers leaves them in no doubt of what action is needed to improve their practice to consistently good or better.

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**

Support from the local authority had started before the inspection and it has been tailored to the recommendations from the inspection. The local authority officer has organised support from consultants in English and mathematics to provide training to teachers and guidance to subject leaders.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for St. Helens and as below.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Mulgrew

**Her Majesty's Inspector**