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5 July 2013

Mr Patrick Fielding and Mrs Sarah Fielding  
Executive Headteachers  
Claremont Primary and Nursery School  
Claremont Road  
Off Hucknall Road  
Nottingham  
NG5 1BH

Dear Mr and Mrs Fielding

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Claremont Primary and Nursery School**

Following my visit to your school on 4 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and findings of the inspection. 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in October 2012. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Director of Children's Services for Nottingham City local authority.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Spencer  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2012**

- Improve leadership and management by:
  - building effective working relationships between leaders and all staff, in order to promote a shared vision for the school's future improvement and to secure greater stability in staffing
  - ensuring that unfilled jobs in management, such as the post of special educational needs coordinator and staff responsible for key stages, are filled as soon as possible
  - establishing targets for staff to improve their work that are linked to specific training for each individual.
  
- Ensure that the school's self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate, and informs high-quality improvement plans that include clear criteria against which success can be frequently and thoroughly checked and measured.
  
- Overhaul the approach to managing pupils' behaviour so that any sanctions for misbehaviour are proportionate and systems are followed by staff.
  
- Ensure that the governing body not only supports school leaders and managers but also makes them accountable for how well the school performs.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 4 July 2013**

### **Evidence**

The inspection focused on how well leaders are addressing all of the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last full inspection. The inspection also focused on the extent to which recent turbulence in leadership has impacted on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. During this inspection, the inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised documents including the school's improvement plans, minutes from governing body meetings, data on pupils' progress, leaders' records of teachers' performance, and the school's single central record of staff suitability checks. Meetings were held with the head of school and the executive headteachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governing body representative, and other senior leaders. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. Informal conversations took place with parents and carers on the playground. The inspector observed teaching in three lessons, taught by three teachers. All of these were held jointly with the head of school. The inspector also visited other lessons for short periods of time to check work in pupils' books and observe pupils' behaviour.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring visit, the headteacher has left the school. Two executive headteachers, who share the role jointly, have been appointed, initially until September 2014. As part of this arrangement, the school has entered into an informal collaborative partnership with two other local schools. The acting deputy headteacher has been appointed to the role of head of school, initially until September 2014. An acting deputy headteacher has been appointed, initially until April 2014. A specialist special educational needs coordinator has been appointed, in conjunction with a partner school, initially until September 2014. The Key Stage 2 leader and the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 leader are on maternity leave. Acting leaders have been appointed to cover these posts, initially until September 2014.

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

The executive headteachers and the head of school have got off to a strong start. They have been successful in forming positive and constructive working relationships with staff, parents and carers. They have quickly and accurately identified the key areas for school improvement, and have wasted no time in starting to take action to address them. Staff have a clear understanding of the school's key priorities, and commented that new, weekly briefings from the senior leadership team have supported this. Several teachers said, 'Staff meetings are always very sharply focused on how we can improve the school.'

The governing body has been successful in securing increased stability in staffing, following a complex period of turbulence in school leadership. For example, key senior leadership posts and the post of special educational needs coordinator have now been filled, until at least the end of the next academic year. Staff express relief that plans are in place to secure greater stability in leadership, and have full faith in the school's new leaders to move the school forwards.

Leaders have increased the frequency of their checks on the quality of teaching. As a result, they have been able to identify whole-school development priorities to improve teaching, and also to identify the next steps that individual teachers need to take to improve their practice. However, specific training needs for individuals to support their improvement are not yet identified clearly enough.

In a short period of time, leaders have rigorously and accurately evaluated the performance of the school. They have recognised that recent turbulence in leadership has had some minor adverse impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in a small minority of classes. Clear plans are in place to address this. Senior leaders are in the process of developing revised improvement plans for the whole school in response to the latest summer 2013 data about pupils' achievement.

Leaders have successfully overhauled the school's systems and procedures to manage pupils' behaviour. The school's new behaviour management systems focus on greater consistency between the ways in which pupils' behaviour is managed in lessons and at other times of the school day, including lunchtimes. The systems also encourage staff to tackle the management of behaviour in a positive way through pupils being issued with, and encouraged to retain, behaviour tokens known as 'Claremont Coins'. Pupils and parents and carers report that behaviour has improved since the last inspection. During this monitoring visit, pupils were observed behaving well in lessons and in other areas of the school.

The governing body, particularly the Executive Committee, challenge leaders and hold them to account increasingly well. For example, governors have challenged leaders to clarify how pupil premium (additional government funding) money is being used, and the impact the funding is making on improving pupils' achievement. However, governors do not check the work of the school for themselves frequently enough, and sometimes rely too heavily on reports from senior leaders to inform them about the school's work. Many governors do not yet have well developed skills to enable them to analyse data about pupils' progress. Firm plans are in place to address these issues in the autumn term 2013.

### **Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- Staff morale has improved significantly since the time of the last monitoring visit. Staff say that they 'feel valued' by senior leaders. Consequently, staff are more open to new ideas and show increased determination to improve.

- Partnership working with other schools with a track record of success in the informal collaborative partnership is adding additional capacity to the school's leadership, and is accelerating the pace of change and improvement.

### **Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- Pupils' attendance remains below the national average. Leaders have already started to take appropriate actions to address this and have targeted pupils' attendance as a key improvement priority for 2013/14.
- Although school leadership arrangements are more stable than previously, plans for the school's leadership beyond September 2014 remain uncertain. This makes it difficult for leaders to devise longer-term plans for the school's improvement.

The school's single central record accurately records the checks made on the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers working with children.

### **External support**

The local authority has provided appropriate support since the last inspection. Support to provide increased stability in school leadership, and to support school leaders to improve the school's behaviour management strategies, has been particularly successful.