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16 July 2013

Mrs Joanne Eagleton (Executive Headteacher)  
Headteacher  
Ecclesfield Primary School  
High Street  
Ecclesfield  
Sheffield  
South Yorkshire  
S35 9UD

Dear Mrs Eagleton (Executive Headteacher)

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ecclesfield Primary School, Sheffield**

Following my visit to your school on 15 July 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 in March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement and action plans. I looked at the written feedback leaders give to teachers after a lesson observation or coaching session. We toured the school with the deputy headteacher and made a series of brief lesson visits.

### **Context**

Two class teachers are leaving the school at the end of this term. Four teachers, including three newly qualified teachers, are due to join the school in September.

### **Main findings**

You have maintained a sharp focus on improving the school rapidly. Other leaders and governors are supporting this work effectively and mirroring your high expectations. Leaders and teachers have responded swiftly to the areas requiring improvement at the last inspection. For example, pupils can now explain confidently what they need to do to improve their work. This is because teachers now routinely point out what pupils are doing

well and adding 'a wish' to explain the next steps they should take to make the work even better. Most teachers give their pupils time to think about these improvements before they start the next piece of work but this is not consistent.

You and the deputy headteacher have wasted no time in raising teachers' awareness of how more able pupils can be stretched. Teachers have improved their planning to identify how they will meet the needs of groups of pupils of different abilities. However, they are not making best use of pupils' good behaviour by giving them regular opportunities to work in groups to solve hard problems for themselves.

Middle leaders are developing their evaluative skills through a detailed plan of support and training. They are regularly involved in checking on the quality of pupils' work and on the quality of teaching. Senior leaders have made sure middle leaders are learning how to spot exactly what teachers need to do to improve their work. The written feedback teachers get following lesson observations or a coaching session is of high quality because it clearly links the impact teaching is having on learning.

The school's improvement and action planning is focussed on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You have made sure this is refined regularly so that it remains current and useful. Leaders and governors have clear 'milestones' to refer to when they check on how well the school is doing. Pupils also have a part to play in evaluating the quality of the school's work. Recently, members of the school council did some research on how well reading was being promoted, providing you with some interesting information. Not all groups of pupils are involved in this way.

Governors continue to provide the school with the right balance of support and challenge. They visit the school regularly to make sure they have an accurate view of how well the school is doing. 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:

- Increase opportunities for pupils to work in groups to solve problems independently.
- Make sure pupils always have time to respond to teachers' marking.
- Develop ways of involving all groups of pupils in improving the school.

### **External support**

The local authority has offered effective support in monitoring the impact you and other leaders have had on improving the school. Leaders have forged strong links with the partner school and this is giving all staff, including midday assistants and administrative staff, to share ideas and improve their work.

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

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

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt

**Her Majesty's Inspector**