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20 September 2013

Mrs Alison Bardsley  
Headteacher  
Sidlesham Primary School  
Keynor Lane  
Sidlesham  
Chichester  
PO20 7NL

Dear Mrs Bardsley

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

Following my visit to your school on 19 September, 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 June 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

- ensure that the school's improvement plan contains clearer links between planned actions and raising achievement
- ensure that targets for attainment and progress for all groups of pupils are clearly expressed and shared with staff and governors
- ensure that governors' role in monitoring improvements is more evident and governor contribution to continuing school improvement remains strong.

## **Evidence**

During my visit, I had a discussion with your new local authority improvement adviser and looked at plans and records, including the post-Ofsted school improvement plan. I met the Chair and two other members of the governing body. I particularly appreciated the discussions that I was able to have with you and your deputy and the opportunity to have a tour of the school. It was helpful to be able to consider with you the progress made by pupils and the information available about attainment and target setting for this academic year.

## **Context**

There have been a number of changes to the staff and governing body since the recent section 5 inspection. Four new teachers joined the school in September 2013; there are three new governors and one vacancy. Work has been carried out to improve the environment for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## **Main findings**

Following your appointment in September 2012, you had already become aware of the need to take action on the areas for improvement that were identified at the recent inspection. You and your senior staff used that experience well to implement key actions in order to move the school forward more rapidly. Your school improvement plan is clear about the steps needed to improve the school and many of these are having impact. However, actions are not linked clearly enough to the intended impact on pupils' achievement for you and the governors to be sure that they are working.

Decisive action has been taken to raise the quality of teaching, including through the appointment of new teaching staff. You, your deputy and other experienced staff are providing positive role models for those who are in their first years of teaching. Good use was made of training days at the beginning of the term to share the school's ambition and key priorities for improvement. The contribution made by teaching assistants to pupils' learning is developing well. It is pleasing to see the increase in pupils' own involvement in their learning and in the life of the school, including in working with you to develop the 'five positive attitudes to learning' that everyone will use.

You are aware that, because the quality of teaching in the past was inconsistent, the progress made by the pupils has varied between year groups. Too many pupils in Key Stage 1 failed to make progress at or above expected rates in the previous academic year. Pupils currently make less progress in mathematics than they do in writing and reading. You are clearly taking strong action to prevent this pattern continuing. Very early evidence shows that all pupils are making greater strides in their learning as a result of an improvement in teaching. You are collecting useful information on progress being made. However, targets for attainment and progress

are not clearly expressed for all groups of pupils. This makes it difficult for you, governors and subject leaders to be clear about what you expect from teachers as the year progresses.

The governing body, found to be very effective at the recent inspection, has recently had a number of changes of membership and has had little opportunity to meet since the inspection. It is evident that governors have worked with you very effectively to make improvements in teaching. The new school improvement plan has yet to be agreed by governors and the governing body's role in monitoring the effectiveness of steps taken, particularly in improving achievement, is unclear.

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 lead adviser has maintained contact with the school since the recent inspection. Financial support is being provided to support school improvement and a new school improvement adviser has just been allocated. It is too early to identify the impact of this support.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Duffy  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**