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25 September 2013

Mr Chris Pearce  
Headteacher  
Pickering Community Junior School  
Middleton Road  
Pickering  
North Yorkshire  
YO18 8AJ

Dear Mr Pearce

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Pickering Community Junior School, North Yorkshire**

Following my visit to your school on 24 September 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 July 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:

- increase the governor representation on the school performance and improvement committee in order to evaluate and monitor the work of the school more effectively
- ensure that subject improvement plans for English and mathematics make specific reference to the impact actions are to have on pupils' learning and progress.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, representatives of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority. A brief meeting also took place with the subject leaders for English and mathematics. I reviewed the school improvement plan and the local authority support plan.

## **Context**

Since the recent section 5 inspection there have been no significant changes to the school's organisation.

## **Main findings**

The headteacher has ensured that the pace of improvement has been maintained since the recent section 5 inspection when the school was judged to no longer require special measures. The school improvement plan has been amended to include all of the areas identified for improvement and a number of initiatives have been implemented. Pupils books throughout the school show that they now have increased opportunities to apply their literacy skills in history, geography and science.

The work of the special needs co-ordinator has been reviewed. As a result the provision for pupils receiving additional support during lessons is being checked more carefully in order to ensure good progress. The difference in the roles of phase leaders and subject co-ordinators is now clear. Phase leaders are responsible for the quality of teaching and learning and hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make. Subject co-ordinators work with staff to support the development of skills and subject knowledge. As a result of these developments, leaders at all levels are beginning to make a more positive and co-ordinated contribution to school improvement. However, in order to further maximise the contribution made by subject leaders it is essential that they are clear as to how their work will impact on pupils' learning in terms of their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding.

The governing body established a small school performance and improvement committee during the previous academic year to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. This proved to be a valuable vehicle in promoting improvement and was fit for purpose at the time. Now that the school is seeking to improve further it is imperative that more governors are involved in providing regular, direct support and challenge to school leaders. The Chair of the Governing Body is to resign his position with immediate effect but his successor is well versed with the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The challenge now for the governing body is to maintain the established momentum of school improvement.

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**

Good support has been provided by the local authority since the previous inspection. A presentation entitled 'Becoming a good school' has been delivered to staff. This has ensured that all staff are aware that the pace of improvement must be

maintained. A similar presentation is to be made to the governing body in the very near future. A link with another school has been arranged by the authority in order to share good practice and a programme of tailored support has been identified to support improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Christopher Keeler

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [ [colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk) ] – for academies