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7 October 2013

Mr Martin Lee  
The Consultant Headteacher  
Niton Primary School  
School Lane  
Ventnor  
Isle of Wight  
PO38 2BP

Dear Mr Lee

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Niton Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 4 October 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in July 2013.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the consultant headteacher and members of the governing body. The inspector held discussions with representatives of the two local authorities that are currently supporting the school. Discussions were also held with members of the senior leadership team, teachers and teaching assistants. The school's single central staffing record was reviewed; the local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated. The inspector undertook a learning walk alongside the consultant headteacher.

### **Context**

Since the inspection two permanent teachers have left the school and two teachers are currently on maternity leave. A permanent teacher has been appointed in Year 6 and one teacher has joined the school on a temporary contract until Easter. After the inspection in July the consultant headteacher became full time. A new Chair of the

Governing Body has been appointed. Due to changes in pupil numbers, some pupils are now taught in classes made up of mixed year groups.

Hampshire local authority and the Isle of Wight have established a strategic partnership since July 2013, with Hampshire overseeing and coordinating the support provided to the school.

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

The consultant headteacher has informally sought the views and opinions of many of the staff in developing the new school improvement plan. Consequently, the culture within the school is beginning to show significant improvements as staff feel more involved in making decisions. One member of staff stated, 'Our opinions really matter.' Individual members of staff now feel able to take greater responsibility for their areas of expertise.

School leaders have received significant support from Hampshire to produce a school improvement plan which complements the local authority's detailed statement of action. Together, these documents provide a clear plan of action to address the issues raised in the last inspection. A particular strength of the plans is the way that interim milestones have been identified, against which leaders are to evaluate the impact of school initiatives. However, the means by which leaders will ensure that their evaluations are accurate could be shown more clearly.

The consultant headteacher has started to introduce some basic management systems, such as regular performance management meetings and targets for teachers that are linked to the progress that pupils need to make. Job descriptions are being reviewed; pupil progress meetings are now due to take place every half term, and there have been revisions to the marking policy and the tracking system.

In mathematics, leaders and managers are beginning to have an impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are now creating their own plans to meet the differing needs of pupils as well as providing greater opportunities for problem-solving activities and group discussions. The support from a local authority consultant has proved invaluable in developing their confidence in this area. The mathematics leader is aware that the school now requires a range of practical resources to support pupils in their learning.

Governors have taken some steps to become more effective. For example, the Chair of the Governing Body has attended some staff meetings, a new structure of committees has been established, and a governor training programme has been set up. However, the planned external review of governance has not taken place and, as a matter of priority, governors need to ensure that the appropriate paperwork is available to expedite this review.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made.

The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Directors of Children's Services for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Gadd

**Additional Inspector**