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23 October 2013

Julia Palmer  
Headteacher  
Silver End Primary School  
School Road  
Silver End  
Essex  
CM8 3RZ

Dear Mrs Palmer

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Silver End Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 22 October 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 governor are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- Improve the school's action plan so that it is clearer about the intended impact of actions on pupils progress and attainment and better reflects the school's rising expectations.
- Ensure that all classrooms and shared areas are well organised and uncluttered.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, four members of the governing body and two representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. We visited all of the classes to observe teaching, spending most time in

Year 6. We looked at the school's achievement data, an external review of governance and a range of other evidence relating to the school's performance. We also looked at pupils' books to collect evidence on the quality of marking and pupils writing.

## **Context**

There is a new Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body. There have been no other significant changes since the school was last inspected.

## **Main findings**

You have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching so that more is now good. The last inspection report asked the school to improve the use of teaching assistants so that they made a greater contribution to teaching. The school has made good progress with this. Teaching assistants are now used much more effectively and often support individuals and groups of pupils well. They ask a range of questions which challenge pupils to think harder and to reflect on their answers. They act as note takers during whole class sessions and record pupils' ideas so that they can be displayed for all to make use of. Pupils say they find this really helpful and is part of the reason they find the 'working walls' so useful. There is an increasing amount of challenge being planned into teaching. As one pupil remarked during a good Year 6 English lesson 'it's really tough but that's the fun'. Pupils are eager learners and in many lessons there is an increasing sense of the fun of learning. Marking is often of good quality, with pupils taking comments into account in order to improve their work. Pupils work well together and enjoy opportunities to assess one another's work and provide feedback on what can be improved. Pupils say they also value self-assessment and that this is a useful strategy for increasing their independence. While most classrooms are bright and lively, some classrooms and shared areas are too cluttered, with books and resources not well presented or organised.

While the school improvement plan is generally fit for purpose it is not clear enough about the intended impact of actions on pupils' achievement. Too much relates to descriptions of what the school is going to do and too little to how the effectiveness will be measured. The governing body welcomes the recent external review of its effectiveness and is committed to improve. Governors are now much clearer about roles and responsibilities and their importance in challenging the school and holding it to account. They are now well placed to do so.

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**

You have made good use of external support. The local authority has provided a useful external review of the work of governing body. There has also been support for the senior leadership team in analysing achievement data across the school. You have made good use of existing partnerships with local schools to improve specific areas of the curriculum such as writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Robert Lovett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**