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17 October 2013

Ms Theresa Buttery  
Headteacher  
Shinewater Primary School  
Milfoil Drive  
Langney  
Eastbourne  
BN23 8ED

Dear Ms Buttery

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

Following my visit to your school on 15 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 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:

- middle leaders have the time, skills and professional development needed to for them to make a positive difference to the progress made by all groups of pupils, particularly in literacy and mathematics
- the school action plan is precise in describing the expected evidence of success against which the impact of actions can be measured
- the school action plan sets out clearly who will monitor the day-to-day implementation of planned actions and who will evaluate their impact.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, I toured the school with you, briefly visiting each class, and discussed with you progress made since the start of the school year. I held meetings with middle leaders, with a representative of the local authority, and with the Chair of Governors and a member of the sub-committee of governors focusing on teaching and learning and the curriculum. I reviewed the school improvement plan and information about pupils' standards and progress this term. I looked at minutes of governors' meetings since the last inspection and minutes of this term's meetings of the school improvement team, and I considered the recent monitoring report from the local authority school improvement advisor.

## **Context**

Substantial changes since the section 5 inspection, which judged the school to require improvement, include:

- your appointment as headteacher from the start of this term
- changes to the structure of the governing body
- changes to the school's leadership structure, including the appointment of an assistant headteacher, who is also the inclusion manager
- establishment of a centralised system for recording and analysing information about pupils' progress
- creation of policies to develop consistent good practice in teaching and learning, to support pupils needing additional help, and to improve attendance
- extension of your nursery provision into the afternoons.

## **Main findings**

Your school action plan sets out an ambitious vision for substantial improvements to teaching and the curriculum. Broad statements about the school's priorities are followed by more sharply focused commentary on actions to be taken to strengthen pupils' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills, to make the curriculum more engaging and to make those responsible for key aspects of the curriculum more effective. While the plan sets out what actions are to be taken, it does not always make it clear who is to take the actions, who is to ensure that the plan is systematically put into practice and who is to evaluate the impact of each intervention on pupils' progress. The plan is not always specific and precise in identifying the evidence of success against which improvement can be measured. Alongside the whole-school action plan, you are putting together a clear and detailed plan for use of the additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or to be in care (pupil premium).

Since taking up your post as headteacher this September, you have set a brisk and purposeful pace in identifying what can and should be done quickly. New teaching

and learning policies provide a firm foundation for the cycle of lesson observations and monitoring you are developing. Establishment of a modern system to record and analyse pupils' progress and standards enables you to track the progress made by different groups of pupils and to monitor the effectiveness of teaching in each part of the school. This more systematic approach, with the greater accountability it brings to subject leaders and teachers, is beginning to raise expectations and to make teachers' lesson planning more responsive to pupils' developing knowledge and skills. Currently, whole-school improvement of literacy and numeracy is inhibited by the development of these key elements being concentrated in the section of the school where the subject leaders themselves teach and where they feel most comfortable. There is, however, evidence that initiatives such as 'writer of the week' are encouraging teachers and pupils to be more ambitious. As you recognise, the relatively weak progress made by some pupils, such as those requiring additional support both in school and from external agencies, is a continuing cause for concern.

Governors recognise that they need to be more incisive and better informed in their monitoring of pupils' standards and progress, and in their judgements about the impact of teaching on learning. Recent changes to the committee structure and to the ways in which governors build up an accurate knowledge of the school are laying foundations for more effective governance.

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**

Helpful support from the local authority has included: monitoring and guidance from the school improvement advisor; support for the school's Early Years Foundation Stage; places for teachers on the 'Every lesson counts' programme; and guidance to help teachers be more accurate in their judgements about standards and progress in Key Stage 2. Through a combination of review and guidance, the local authority is supporting steps being taken by the governors to be more effective as critical friends to the school, particularly in their overview of teaching and pupils' progress. In setting priorities for school improvement and in leading the development and monitoring of teaching and learning, you are benefiting from the support and counsel given by the headteacher of a local school, who brings relevant experience and expertise as a Local Leader of Education.

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

Yours sincerely

Patricia Metham  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**