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21 October 2013

Miss D Shave  
Chalk Ridge Primary School  
Sullivan Road  
Brighton Hill  
Basingstoke  
Hampshire  
RG22 4ER

Dear Miss Shave

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Chalk Ridge Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 18 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, your staff and pupils 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:

- Amend the improvement plan so that it includes specific targets for raising the achievement of different groups of pupils
- Monitor carefully the impact of 'cutaway' sessions to ensure that they are of an equally high standard
- Make sure that the writing tasks that pupils do in different year groups get progressively more challenging
- Bring forward the whole governing body training (planned for March) to this term and ensure that subsequent training enables governors to develop their skills more quickly
- Ensure that the links between governors and leaders provide opportunities to check at first hand the improvement the school is making.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders and four members of the governing body. I accompanied you on a learning walk, visiting 14 lessons briefly. I also observed a whole school assembly attended by parents. During my visit I met with 10 pupils from Year 6 and talked to them about their writing. I also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I evaluated the school's improvement plan and reviewed a range of documentation including information about pupils' progress, minutes from meetings of the governing body and notes of external support from the local authority.

## **Main findings**

You, your senior leaders and the governing body have taken effective action to tackle the areas for improvement identified in the recent section 5 inspection. The improvement plan is sharply focused on those actions that are most likely to bring about quick and sustainable developments. It includes clear and measurable targets and milestones for raising pupils' achievement and improving the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, targets for different groups of pupils are not specific enough.

You have made important changes to the way that teachers plan lessons so that they have a much clearer purpose and focus more specifically on what different groups of pupils need to learn in order to make quick progress. Teachers now plan lessons that typically proceed at a brisk pace and adult support is being used more productively. A key development is the use of 'cutaway' groups. Teachers now plan both whole class teaching and a range of adult-led and independent activities that help pupils to begin their work promptly and take on work that is more challenging. This dynamic approach is already beginning to accelerate pupils' progress. During my visit I was impressed by the almost seamless flow of purposeful activities that were taking place inside and outside of classrooms. However, leaders need to monitor these activities carefully to ensure that they are all of an equally high standard and have a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

Pupils' progress in writing is improving because the approaches teachers take are more varied, more interesting and more consistent across different year groups. Pupils now have frequent opportunities to write at length and for a variety of purposes. They are given better information about the key ingredients for different styles of writing and better feedback on how to improve their work. Teachers intervene more quickly to help pupils improve their writing during the drafting and editing stages. Pupils said that they are now 'getting the hang of' the new target sheets which help them to produce work of a higher standard.

Pupils are now more motivated to write because they are given choices and teachers make imaginative links between the pupils' writing and the other topics they study. Writing tasks often have real audiences. For example, pupils have recently written

letters to authors and to those countries that will compete in the Brazilian World Cup. Pupils are also being taught to plan their writing more effectively and benefit from wider reading, film clips and independent research activities that stimulate their ideas. For example, Year 6 pupils have recently drawn on their wider learning about animals in the Amazon rainforest to successfully produce informative leaflets. Although writing tasks are now more varied, leaders have yet to fully 'map' the different types of writing across year groups so that tasks get progressively more challenging.

Governors now have a better understanding of their role in holding leaders to account for the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils. The governing body committees have been restructured and meetings have been streamlined. Consequently, there are better opportunities to challenge leaders about the progress made by the school. Governors are keen to have a higher profile in the school but their links with senior leaders are currently underdeveloped and do not provide regular opportunities to check at first hand the improvement the school is making. Governors are enthusiastic about developing their skills. Training sessions are planned but some of these are too late in the year to enable governors to develop their skills quickly enough.

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 school and the local authority work well together. The leadership and learning partner is knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for further development. Support from local authority advisers is focused on the areas that need to improve most. The English adviser is working with the school to improve the teaching and assessment of writing. This support has been well received. Staff are successfully putting in place new approaches that are having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to writing and their progress. The local authority has undertaken a review of the governing body. This review identifies strengths and key areas for development. Its findings have been used successfully to draft the governors' monitoring section of the improvement plan. The detailed recommendations will be discussed with governors at a meeting later this term.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Wood  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**