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28 November 2013

Mrs Margaret Burton  
Acting headteacher  
Longley School  
Dog Kennel Bank  
Huddersfield  
West Yorkshire  
HD5 8JE

Dear Mrs Burton

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Longley School, Kirklees**

Following my visit to your school on 27 November 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 September 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.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body including the Chair, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

**Context**

The governing body has appointed a substantive headteacher who will take up post in summer 2014.

## **Main findings**

Leaders, staff and governors have contributed to the school improvement plan and all groups are moving forward briskly in putting the plan into action. Regular, accurate monitoring is helping leaders to evaluate the impact of actions and identify what their next steps should be. Recent lesson observations indicate a small rise in the proportion of good or better teaching and learning. Leaders are analysing strengths and weaknesses seen and using this as a sound basis for providing further training and coaching where appropriate. Training on teaching phonics, the link between letters and sounds, has been provided for all staff. Monitoring shows that this is having a positive impact, not only in the teaching of literacy but also in the delivery of other subjects. A range of resources for promoting the knowledge and use of phonics, appropriate to the particular needs and ages of pupils, has been purchased to support this area of the school's work. The development of dedicated reading time has begun with older pupils.

Work is underway to ensure that appropriately challenging targets, based on national guidance, are set for pupils. A system is being developed to track pupils' progress towards these more regularly so that any underachievement can be identified and addressed rapidly.

In consultation with staff and governors, the behaviour policy has been revised. There is a change of emphasis, with a move towards a positive approach for ensuring that pupils' learning is not hindered by their behaviour. Increased supervision at break and lunchtimes has helped reduce behaviour issues at times of transition so a smoother start can be made to lessons. Training has helped establish a shared understanding by staff of what constitutes bullying. Together with a review of the system for recording incidents of bullying, this is enabling leaders to gain a much more realistic picture of patterns and trends. The school used the recent national anti-bullying week as a good opportunity to further pupils' understanding of bullying and to include families in the drive to prevent this. Tighter procedures have been introduced for referrals to the educational psychology and speech and language therapy services to ensure that the best use is made of these limited professional resources.

Appropriate arrangements have been made to ensure that the school has sufficient leadership capacity in the period before the new headteacher takes up post. This includes the temporary appointment of an experienced senior leader in the role of assistant headteacher. A start has been made on developing middle leaders so that they can fulfil the roles and responsibilities spelled out in revised job descriptions. Middle leaders have begun a recognised training programme and coaching from a Local Leader in Education has been arranged.

Governance has been strengthened. A number of new governors have been appointed, bringing a broad range of pertinent experience and expertise to the governing body. The new Chair, a National Leader in Governance, is planning

reviews of aspects of governance in need of development. The acting headteacher's reports, sent to governors in good time prior to meetings, ensure that the governing body is much better informed about the school's work than was previously the case. The reports highlight key areas and governors are challenging in their questioning about these and other issues. Governors are not content to rely on information provided by leaders. They visit the school, for instance in relation to their particular responsibilities for literacy or financial management, and have an agreed proforma for reporting on their findings to the governing body.

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 considerable support provided by the local authority last year is reducing appropriately as the school's capacity grows. The local authority has arranged support for leadership at senior and middle levels both to secure the stability of the school in the period before the new headteacher takes up post, and to promote the development of middle leaders. The need for regular support for the school's governance is diminishing as a result of the local authority's successful recruitment of governors with relevant skills.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director for Children and Adults for Kirklees and as below.

Yours sincerely

Jane Austin  
**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