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9 December 2013

Joan Dear  
Headteacher  
Frinton-on-Sea Primary School  
Fifth Avenue  
Frinton-on-Sea  
CO13 9LQ

Dear Ms Dear

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Frinton-on-Sea Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 9 December 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection on 8 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are now taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. Senior leaders and governors should take further action to ensure that:

- pupils' progress is accelerated in Year 5, especially in mathematics and writing
- the impact of the various new initiatives is demonstrated by higher achievement in all classes.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings to discuss the action taken since the last inspection were held with you and other staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Two lessons were observed jointly with you and examples of the school's lesson observation records were examined. The school provided its latest assessments for each year group.

## Context

At the time of the first monitoring visit, the school was operating with a temporarily reduced leadership capacity, following the promotion of the deputy headteacher. A newly qualified teacher and two new deputy headteachers took up their posts in September. Two other teachers took on new responsibilities as literacy and mathematics coordinators. The Early Years Foundation Stage teacher is new to that class, but not to the school. New governors have been elected to bring the governing body back up to full strength. Since the last visit there has been a bigger than usual turnover of pupils.

## Main findings

Data management has improved since the last monitoring visit. Assessments are now being compared with those made in other schools to ensure they are reliable. The school now has a clearer idea of the progress being made by pupils in different subjects and year-groups. Assessment data is gathered every half term. The outcomes are discussed with each class teacher to identify strategies for ensuring all pupils are making progress and that gaps in knowledge or understanding are filled.

The 2013 national curriculum assessments showed that progress in reading and writing was good for the Key Stage 2 pupils who left in the summer, but that their progress in mathematics required improvement. This is because few pupils made better than expected progress in mathematics. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 improved to above average in 2013.

The school's attainment records show that pupils in Years 4 and 6 have made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics since beginning Key Stage 2. Pupils in these year-groups have now made up for the slower than expected start that they made in Key Stage 1. Standards in Years 3, 4 and 6 are slightly above the age-related expectations. Year 5 pupils, despite making reasonable progress over the last year are still behind in writing and mathematics.

One of the difficulties faced by the school is that the pupils who joined recently have lower attainment on average than those who left. In addition, some of the new pupils do not have previous national curriculum assessments. Senior leaders cannot be held responsible for the progress made by these pupils in their previous schools, but are determined to ensure that they make good progress from this point forward.

The greater leadership capacity has brought a more urgent approach to improvement and better monitoring. Professional development for teachers and regular book checks are helping to make marking more consistent and more useful to pupils. Lesson observation has been tightened up and teachers are now receiving more pertinent feedback on their strengths and how to improve. Senior leaders strike a careful balance between setting high expectations and giving staff time to improve, especially those new in post or teaching different year-groups this year.

The literacy and mathematics coordinators have been supported by you and the deputy headteachers in establishing themselves in their new roles. They are beginning to lead new initiatives to improve mathematics and to maintain the strength of English. These include promoting a more exploratory approach to learning mathematics and providing training to new staff in use of the school's successful approach to English.

Governors have established additional sources of information, for example by making direct observation of the school and checks on pupils' books. They continue to ask challenging questions; for example, in relation to the number of teaching days lost to training they have sought assurance that the long-term benefit outweighs the short-term disruption. They are very determined that improvement should be as rapid as possible, but recognise that leaders needed time to demonstrate their impact following such a major turnover of staff and leadership roles.

Ofsted will, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. The school has agreed to provide regular updates on pupils' progress.

### **External support**

The local authority is helping to monitor the quality of teaching and to support the new leaders. It is providing support in mathematics and English, including training and advice for the new coordinators, and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The local authority has also set up a link with a successful local school. This is leading to a profitable partnership, focusing on improving the accuracy and reliability of assessment. One teacher has attended training at another outstanding school. The mathematics coordinator and one of the deputy headteachers are due to attend an Ofsted 'Better Mathematics' conference later this week.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen Abbott  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**