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16 December 2013

Ms Paula Wilkinson  
Headteacher  
Meadowside Community Primary and Nursery School  
Clough Avenue  
Longford  
Warrington  
Cheshire  
WA2 9PH

Dear Ms Wilkinson

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Meadowside Community Primary and Nursery School, Warrington**

Following my visit to your school on 13 December 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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 October 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:

- enhance leadership capacity by developing the skills of other leaders so they are involved fully in driving improvement
- develop your analysis of data to include a closer check on the progress pupils make from their different starting points.

### **Evidence**

During my visit, I met with you and the deputy headteacher, five members of the governing body and a local authority officer to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated and school data, including the unvalidated Key Stage 2 results, were scrutinised. Minutes from governing body meetings and the school's monitoring records were also considered. We visited each classroom to talk to pupils, observe them at work and to look at their books. I also met with a small group of older pupils to gather their views on the school's progress.

## **Context**

Since the inspection in October, the special educational needs coordinator has been absent. The Year 2 teacher is leaving at the end of the Christmas term. This class will be taught by the deputy headteacher. A part time teacher will take up post in January. Three new governors have been appointed to the governing body.

## **Main findings**

You are up and running with the issues raised in the recent inspection report. Shortcomings are being tackled with urgency. This is because you are continuing with the successful work which was underway prior to the inspectors visiting your school in October. You, the staff and the governing body are wisely using the inspection findings as a marker in the sand. Your well written action plan shows you have reviewed the impact of past actions and you know what the school needs to do to become good at the next inspection.

Teaching is improving because you make sure teachers receive the right training to help them update their skills. You have rightly focused on developing teachers' subject knowledge. This means teachers are becoming increasingly skilled in identifying the different steps each pupil needs to take to make the best possible progress in lessons and over time. You know what teaching is typically like on a day-to-day basis because you check what you see in lessons with the work in pupils' books and the data you hold on pupils' achievement. As a result, you can pinpoint strengths, share expertise and support individual teachers who need extra help to improve. Your checks on teaching are frequent and thorough. The feedback you give to teachers is precise and leaves no room for doubt about what each teacher needs to do to improve their performance.

Although it is early days since the inspection, there is evidence that your actions are bearing fruit. Teachers' marking is helping pupils know what they need to do to improve; the 'Read and Respond' strategy means pupils have ample opportunity to reflect on their work and take teachers' advice and guidance on board. Classrooms are vibrant. Pupils' learning is supported through helpful prompts and their efforts are celebrated through imaginative and attractive displays around the school. You respond well to the issues raised by data. Immediate action to tackle weaknesses in the teaching of early reading has led to staff training and a complete review of teaching sessions. The impact of this work is showing in pupils' work as pupils use their knowledge of the sounds that letters make to spell common words. Data show more pupils are making better than expected progress since the beginning of the academic year in reading, writing and mathematics. Nonetheless, you are fully aware that there is a lot of work to do to help the current Year 5 and Year 6 pupils make up for lost ground and reach the standards expected for their age.

You and the deputy headteacher are a cohesive team. However, both of you are carrying a lot of the responsibility for bringing about change. Members of the newly

formed leadership team understand their role, but they and other leaders are in the early stages of driving improvement.

Pupils speak very highly of the improvements you have brought to the school. Pupils say they have to work harder than they did in the past because they are expected to read and write more often. They feel more confident about putting pen to paper because teachers are good at explaining what pupils need to do by the end of each lesson. Pupils appreciate the learning prompts around the classroom and the feedback they receive from teachers.

You keep a close check on the progress different groups of pupils are making across the school. This means there is timely support for any pupil in danger of lagging behind. However, you do not always dig into the data deeply enough to keep a close eye on the progress pupils make from their different starting points.

You have the full confidence of the governing body; they recognise the positive difference you are making to the school. Governors are firmly behind you in your quest for the school to be judged good at the next inspection. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They keep a close watch on performance data through a special committee who meet frequently. They also visit classes regularly to find out for themselves how well the school is performing.

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 local authority is providing good support to the school which you are using well to deliver your planned actions. For example, local authority consultants have helped you and other leaders check the quality of teaching and learning through scrutinising pupils' books. A local authority officer visits the school often to check on your progress and to make sure you are getting the right support. You are using your well established links with a group of local schools to provide whole-school training and open up opportunities for teachers to meet and learn from best practice. The work you have commissioned from an independent consultant has been helpful in supporting the temporary leadership arrangements in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanne Olsson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**