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10 December 2013

Mr John Bagwell  
Headteacher  
Parley First School  
Glenmoor Road  
Ferndown  
BH22 8QE

Dear Mr Bagwell,

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Parley First 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 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:

- focus professional development on coaching middle leaders and other adults in order to strengthen their leadership skills, particularly in the monitoring of teaching, so that any remaining weaknesses can be effectively addressed
- work closely with external partners to strengthen the capacity of the governing body so that it can carry out its statutory duties and exercise greater impact on school improvement.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, teaching staff and members of the Governing Body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The impact of performance management and school improvement plans were evaluated.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection staffing remains stable.

## **Main findings**

The lack of consistently good teaching remains a key issue for improvement. However, you are working determinedly to secure a culture of rigorous self-evaluation and high expectations throughout the school. With the support of the governing body you have strengthened the process of performance management so that all staff now have personal targets that link their professional development with pupils' performance and the school improvement plan. You acknowledge the next step is to coach teachers and other adults who require improvement in building professional confidence. This will promote a culture of strong professional accountability throughout the school so that senior leader can secure sustainable improvements to teaching and learning. You have successfully raised teachers' expectations and this has led to teachers setting clearer learning objectives that better provide for the learning needs of pupils.

A regular programme of monitoring the work of the school has been established and staff have welcomed this improved model of accountability. You have begun to empower your middle leaders to take more responsibility for school improvement and they say they have a clearer understanding of their areas of responsibility.

You say you now better understand the impact good teaching and intervention work is having on the progress of cohorts as well as individuals. For example, A whole school focus on the teaching of reading has been successfully introduced and you have reviewed the quality of teachers' marking to maximise pupils' progress. Also, where some pupils have not made the expected progress you have begun to use this information to set and monitor targets more effectively with teachers.

Governors acknowledge that in the past they have not monitored the work you do and your performance overall closely enough and this has resulted in a lack of challenge. However, this is now no longer the case. Members of the governing body are taking advantage of training opportunities to strengthen their abilities to hold the school robustly to account and they are keen to learn from other governing bodies how to use their time to best effect. You have successfully revised your existing policy on attendance in order to reduce absences, including authorised absence. Communications with governors has improved and governors' meetings are now more structured to address the school's areas for improvement. The more regular updates you provide on pupils' progress and the work of the school are helping them better understanding the school's strengths and areas for improvement. For example, they understand the need to improve the quality of reading throughout the school. This better understanding is enabling them to ask more challenging questions of senior leaders.

## **External support**

You are wisely drawing on the expertise of external partners, including the local authority, to provide for your own professional development and to develop the skills and confidence of your staff and governors. The local authority has supported senior leaders in helping to address these inconsistencies in teaching. In addition you have begun to look for opportunities for your staff to visit other good and outstanding providers.

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

Yours sincerely

David Edwards  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**