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Mrs S Arnold  
Headteacher  
Brook Community Primary School  
Brook  
Ashford  
Kent  
TN25 5PB

Dear Mrs Arnold

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Brook Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 12 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:

- sharpen, synthesise and focus more tightly its self-evaluations, data analysis and school improvement planning, so that the key messages within these are known and understood clearly by staff, governors and, as appropriate, parents and the community
- ensure that pupil premium expenditure is plainly identified and recorded and its impact on the learning of entitled pupils clearly evaluated.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you, other staff members, pupils, representatives of the Governing Body and of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan and other key documents, including teachers' lesson plans, records of school self-evaluation and data about how well pupils are progressing. We visited together each class at work and looked at a small sample of pupils' writing.

## **Context**

Since the inspection, you have been appointed as the substantive headteacher.

## **Main findings**

Your leadership is positive, reassuring and well-received within the school and, from the evidence available to me, the wider community. This has led to a number of encouraging developments since the inspection. For example, the restructuring of the morning teaching sessions, for Years 1 and 2, although only very recently started, offers potential to raise pupils' attainment. You have thoughtfully re-organised the teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) across the younger year groups. A revised policy has clarified how pupils' behaviour is managed. You are rightly considering how the school's pleasant grounds can be better used all year round. You are correctly working alongside staff to help them improve their teaching, including how well work is matched to the needs of all pupils. Pupils appeared to be interested in the lessons we visited together. In the Years 3 and 4 class, the teaching we saw was efficient in helping pupils to use alliteration and figurative language, with pupils well engaged.

The proof of the effectiveness of all this work will be in how well it improves the learning and progress of the pupils. The school needs to be able to make this link clearly. The work of you and the staff, do needs to be as efficient and effective as possible. We discussed at some length, therefore, the importance of ensuring that all key school systems and processes are very sharply focused and recorded.

For example, the school improvement plan has the right areas of emphasis and you have improved the way it is organised. Nevertheless, you and the governors realise that it should show more clearly what the targets and objectives are for pupil outcomes, timescales, and who has responsibility for monitoring and evaluating each action taken. The school has very useful, detailed data about the progress each pupil is making in English and mathematics. The next step with this is to ensure that the key overarching messages coming from that data are regularly, precisely and succinctly identified and recorded. This should help guide the work of staff and inform future improvement planning. Similarly, we discussed the programme of regular lesson observations. This needs to be arranged so that it is mainly concerned with how well all pupils learn rather than checking what teachers do. Key pointers to

help teachers bring improvement need to be precisely identified and followed up. We discussed, with the useful support of the local authority, how some further training and support might be made available to you in sharpening these processes.

The school's evaluation of pupil premium expenditure is not sharp enough. It needs to show clearly how the grant has been spent and why and the impact of this on the learning and development of the eligible pupils.

The governing body is working very hard to improve its effectiveness and has begun its external review. Governors are mainly new to their roles and, understandably, on a learning curve; as the Chair said, 'We have not done this before.' Many are actively involved in worthwhile training and undertake useful visits to the school to gain first-hand information. Governors managed the process of appointing the new headteacher with rigour and great care. They are very committed to, and supportive of, the school. They are developing their skills usefully in asking robust and challenging questions, knowing that the school must improve quickly.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. I will be very happy to talk these matters through with you as time progresses and am likely to visit the school again in the future to check on progress.

### **External support**

The local authority's work with the school is effective and attentive to the right areas. The local authority initially brokered your involvement in the school. Both local authority officers I met know the school well and are ready to support you in the areas needing further work and development.

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

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**