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19 December 2013

Leah Adams  
Acting headteacher  
Northlands Primary School  
Pinders Lane  
CV21 2SS

Dear Mrs Adams

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Northlands Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 18 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 ensure all teachers have:

- an immediate, accurate understanding of each pupil's current attainment in writing and mathematics
- the necessary skills to plan work that challenges all pupils at the right level in writing and mathematics, including the more able and those who find learning more difficult.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school's action plan was evaluated. Other documents were examined: your checks on the quality of teaching, information about pupils' current achievement, your records of incidences of poor behaviour and information about

how teachers have been set targets to improve pupils' achievement. A short visit was made to each classroom to talk to pupils about their learning and their feelings of safety as well as to look at the work in their books.

## **Context**

The headteacher left the school at the end of the first week in December, at which point you became acting headteacher. You do not have an acting deputy headteacher. One full-time teacher, who has been off sick for a long period of time, is to leave the school at the end of December. These pupils will be taught by a temporary teacher until the planned permanent arrangement comes into effect in February. Another teacher, who works part-time, is also leaving at the end of term.

## **Main findings**

After a slow start, there is now a sense of urgency to the actions you and governors are taking. Since becoming acting headteacher, you have sharpened the school's action plan and taken decisive steps to ensure staff know what needs to be done. The plan sets out very clear timescales for actions to be completed and a range of measures by which you will judge their impact. As a result of the findings in this inspection, you plan to adjust some of the planned timescales and ways of measuring success to track improvement more closely.

The action plan shows you are tackling issues in a sensible order. For example, as well as stepping up the intensity of support, challenge and training for teachers, you are to implement significant changes in the structure and organisation of lunchtimes from the beginning of January, to make dining a more pleasurable experience for pupils and to ensure pupils feel cared for and respected at this time.

You have refined the system for recording incidences of unacceptable behaviour in classrooms and in the playground. You frequently check these records to identify patterns of behaviour for individual pupils and across different classes. You have, rightly, used this information to add to your judgement of the quality of teaching in each class and well as to identify which teachers are not following agreed guidelines for managing behaviour.

Prior to the resignation of the headteacher, in your role as deputy headteacher, you provided training to help teachers make intended learning in lessons clear. You had begun to implement a well-planned programme of coaching for individual teachers. Improvements observed in this inspection were as a result of this support. Now you are acting headteacher, you have brokered external consultants to continue this programme and plan to keep a close check on how well it is working. This is essential, as work seen in pupils' books during the inspection shows quite a number have made inadequate progress in writing and/or mathematics since the last inspection. This was seen in a number of classes, including those taught by teachers on the upper pay scale.

A committee of governors will oversee the action plan and challenge you each half term to demonstrate it is driving improvement rapidly enough. Governors have set up an additional group to specifically focus on the impact of the additional funding from the government (the pupil premium) allocated to support pupils eligible for free school meals and other groups, such as those who are looked after by the local authority.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. During the inspection you agreed that subject leaders would attend a series of HMI-led workshops to help them better understand their role. You also agreed to send HMI termly updates on pupils' achievement, copies of your reports to the governing body and reports sent to you following local authority visits to the school.

### **External support**

You have been proactive in requesting and accessing appropriate support to help you lead rapid improvement. For example, you have agreed with a colleague in another school that she will act as a mentor to you. The local authority is in the process of brokering external consultants to: support improvements in the quality of teaching; ensure teachers assess pupils' achievement accurately, increase the impact of subject leaders; and provide a headteacher 'professional partner' for you. The local authority plans to conduct a review of teaching and learning each term and to visit the school each half term to check progress with the action plan. As a result of concerns identified during this inspection, HMI feels the local authority must provide more regular support and challenge to the school, focusing sufficiently on evidence in pupils' books, and should take action to increase the capacity of leadership at all levels, so that the acting headteacher does not have too many responsibilities.

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

Yours sincerely

Sandra Hayes  
**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 Warwickshire