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16 January 2014

Mrs Lorraine Walwyn  
Headteacher  
Mab Lane Primary School  
Mab Lane  
Liverpool  
Merseyside  
L12 6QL

Dear Mrs Walwyn

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Mab Lane Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 the action plans to include details of when actions will be completed and their impact evaluated.
- ensure that there is full accountability for improvement in teaching and learning by confirming how that area is to be led.
- monitor the impact of the new marking policy to ensure that high quality marking and feedback accelerate pupils' learning.
- provide wider opportunities for pupils to practise their writing in subjects other than English.

## **Evidence**

Meetings were held with you, subject leaders for English and mathematics, pupils, the Chair of Governors, a representative of the local authority and a National Leader of Education. The school's post-Ofsted action plan, raising attainment plan and other documents were evaluated. Samples of Year 2, 5 and 6 pupils' work were reviewed. Classrooms were visited.

## **Context**

One teacher is on long-term absence and three teachers have resigned. Two governors have resigned and the Governing Body reconstituted.

## **Main findings**

Teaching is improving. The timetable each morning has been reorganised to bring together English activities into a distinct block. A similar arrangement has been made for mathematics learning. Teachers are able to build pupils' basic skills more systematically. Pupils say they find this helpful. As teaching time has increased in English and mathematics this has made less time available for other subjects. This limits the opportunities for pupils to practise their writing more widely.

A new marking policy has been introduced. Teachers continue to provide regular feedback on pupils' written work, particularly in English and mathematics. However, marking does not always encourage pupils to correct or improve their work, nor do teachers allow time for pupils to do so. Advice to pupils on how they can improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar is not consistent. Pupils know about their overall targets, which are realistically demanding, but these targets are not referred to sufficiently in teachers' planning nor in the marking in pupils' books. The schools' analysis shows that the rates of pupils' progress have increased. If any pupils are falling behind, extra support is carefully planned and evaluated.

Leadership and management have been strengthened. Senior leaders' monitoring and evaluation has given them a good understanding of the schools' priorities. Training and development opportunities are being used effectively to develop middle leaders' leadership alongside their monitoring and evaluation skills. Further training is planned for senior leaders. These opportunities are reflected in the linked post-Ofsted action plan and the raising attainment plan. However, these plans are not sufficiently precise in setting out when actions will be taken or their impact reviewed. This means it is harder for leaders and governors to ensure that improvement continues with the same rapid pace.

Staffing is increasingly settled. The school continues to ensure that, if vacancies occur, strong candidates are appointed. Greater confidence in the staff team is allowing leaders to provide more robust challenge. Leaders are sensibly reviewing

staff roles as change happens. Despite recent developments, no leader currently has an explicit responsibility for teaching and learning.

The governing body has re-constituted. It is providing increased challenge and support. A number of things are contributing to this, these include: committees now better matching the needs of the school; governors having better understanding of the school through more day-to-day involvement; greater participation of teachers in governing body meetings; high quality training for new governors and the chair; learning from effective governance in other schools and a commitment to review and challenge its own effectiveness. The recommendation that an external review of governance should be undertaken is not identified in the post-Ofsted action plan. However, such a review will take place later this term.

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**

Local authority officers provide strong and effective challenge and support to the school. There is frequent contact to provide training for leaders and teachers. A local authority representative meets with leaders and governors regularly to check that the required improvement is happening. These meetings have made a good contribution to the schools' rapid development and are recorded in detail. However, these records do not confirm that actions agreed in one meeting have been completed by the next. This means that important actions may not be followed up. The school, in partnership with the local authority, is working with a national leader of education (NLE) from a local outstanding school. The NLE and her school are providing good support in developing leadership, for example, in supporting improvement in mathematics at Mab Lane Primary School.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Liverpool and as below.

Yours sincerely

David Selby

**Her Majesty's Inspector**