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27 January 2014

Kate Beer  
Offmore Primary School  
Wordsworth Crescent  
Kidderminster  
DY10 3HA

Dear Mrs Beer

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

Following my visit to your school on 24 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 21 November 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:

- Improve the effectiveness of senior leadership, particularly at Key Stage 1.
- Include further plans to improve the curriculum so pupils experience more interesting lessons and develop more positive attitudes to learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of 'next steps' marking by ensuring the areas for improvement are consistently linked more strongly to the National Curriculum and by ensuring pupils respond to these.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and three other leaders, the Chair of Governors and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan, information related to the tracking of pupils' progress and the minutes of the governing body meetings were evaluated. Short visits were made to ten lessons with you to observe teaching.

## **Context**

Since the last Section 5 inspection the leader responsible for English has relinquished this role. Your deputy is now undertaking this role. You and your deputy have reduced your teaching commitment.

## **Main findings**

Your plans produced in response to the recent inspection clearly indicate how you intend to improve teaching and most aspects of leadership. You are developing the key indicators that can be used by the governing body to regularly check the progress the school is making. You have sensibly decided that these should be linked to the assessment data that governors regularly interrogate. While undertaking our visits to lessons I was impressed by the astute insights you have into the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. You are correct in your conclusion that the school needs to ensure that the good practice that does exist in the school needs to be much more consistently implemented across all classes, particularly at Key Stage 1. Marking typifies this variability. We observed highly effective practice in which pupils were involved in determining for themselves how they could improve (next steps) using robust criteria taken from the national curriculum. But we also saw examples of next steps that did not aid pupils because they were too general and in any case there was little evidence that pupils responded to these.

There are strengths in leadership in your school; for instance, your mathematics leader has identified resources that have the potential to improve the pace of learning by allowing pupils to make choices and focus more on work they find challenging. Your Early Years Foundation Stage leader is ensuring children are being challenged through questioning that promotes commendable higher level thinking, for instance investigating the food preferences of an alien. The outcomes in the letters and sounds screening check and the end of Key Stage 1 assessments suggest weakness in the leadership of this phase.

The Chair of Governors is providing you with useful additional support. The governing body is frank in its admission that it has not previously used performance management well enough to hold senior leaders to account. It was reassuring to hear about the more appropriate targets that are now being included in performance management. Although your improvement plans are generally strong they do not currently give sufficient attention to the improvements needed to the curriculum to make it more interesting.

## **External support**

The school benefits from working in partnership with other strong local authority schools. Your local authority adviser is being of great assistance to the school by her recent identification of the improvements needed to leadership and management.

The local authority has agreed to keep me up-dated about the progress the school is making.

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

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**