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4 February 2014

Mr David Reddy  
Headteacher  
George Romney Junior School  
Cobden Street  
Dalton-in-Furness  
Cumbria  
LA15 8SE

Dear Mr Reddy

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to George Romney Junior School, Cumbria**

Following my visit to your school on 3 February 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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 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:

- refine the post-Ofsted action plan to identify how, when and by whom the impact of specific actions on pupils' progress will be monitored and evaluated
- strengthen links between subject action plans and the post-Ofsted action plan
- continue to strengthen arrangements for transition from the infant school to ensure continuity in learning from the start of Year 3.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the Assistant Headteacher, subject leaders, two governors, and a group of pupils. I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plans and supporting documents were evaluated and I visited each classroom briefly during lesson times.

### **Context**

Since the last inspection, new governors have been appointed to broaden the skills of the

Governing Body. An additional teaching assistant has been appointed to support pupils' speech and language development.

## **Main findings**

You have put appropriate plans in place to tackle the areas identified as requiring improvement at the last inspection. The plans identify clearly the actions to be taken within the next eighteen months in order to secure improvements. The post-inspection plan contains a number of useful milestones by which to measure success at specific points. However, it does not currently indicate who will monitor and evaluate the impact of actions or how this will be done.

The plans are progressing well with the full support of all staff and governors, demonstrating that senior leaders have the capacity to secure further improvement. Since the last inspection, you have introduced more rigorous systems to check and measure the progress of different groups of pupils in each year group. You have set challenging progress targets to make sure that pupils make the best possible progress from their different starting points when they enter the school in Year 3. Plans to strengthen transition arrangements, focusing on ensuring continuity and progression in learning, are appropriate although still at early stages.

You have taken swift action to help teachers learn from each other and from practice in other schools. The school has become an 'alliance partner' in the Local Association of System Leaders (LASL) group, which effectively facilitates training and networking for teachers. You have also arranged for visits to other schools, including an outstanding school, to support collaborative planning and observation of lessons.

Subject leaders now have a more defined role in checking pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. They talk knowledgeably about their subject and the aspects that require further improvement, informed by recent subject audits. Each subject leader has an appropriate action plan to support development in their subject area although the plans are not yet fully linked with the post-inspection plan.

The skills of the governing body have been strengthened through recent appointments and with training. Governors have a range of expertise. Following some initial shock at the findings of the last inspection, they now have a good understanding of what needs to improve. The establishment of the 'Progress and Standards' committee has enhanced governors' role in challenging and supporting school leaders to raise standards. They are receiving more in-depth reports from leaders and consequently have a better understanding of data than previously.

Pupils are pleased with the changes that have taken place recently. They say that teachers 'try to make learning relevant and at the right level'. They say that the best lessons 'are fun but also challenging'. Pupils feel that their school is friendly and safe.

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**

School leaders are making very good use of opportunities for professional dialogue and sharing of good practice through the Furness Primary Collaborative. The local authority had been supporting the school at their 'universal level' prior to the last inspection, and with little impact, having evaluated the school as 'good'. Support has stepped up since, with the establishment of a 'School Specific Monitoring Group' (SSMG). The local authority has brokered useful links with an outstanding primary school.

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

Yours sincerely

Jean Olsson-Law

**Her Majesty's Inspector**