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Mr Simon King  
Headteacher  
Lister Junior School  
Green Lane  
Liverpool  
Merseyside  
L13 7DT

Dear Mr King

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lister Junior School, Liverpool**

Following my visit to your school on 26 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 action plan further by making a greater proportion of the success criteria clearly measurable so that progress can be checked easily and regularly.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, pupils, a member of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. I also conducted a work scrutiny and had a tour of the school.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection the literacy coordinator has stepped down from her role and two other members of staff have assumed responsibility for improvement in this area of the school's work. A new governor has been appointed who is a librarian from the local library.

## **Main findings**

The inspection judgement came as no surprise in November because a local authority review just one week prior to the inspection had confirmed the school's own evaluation that there were weaknesses in reading and spelling. A well-focused action plan had already been devised and this has formed the basis of the post-inspection action plan. This plan is supplemented by more detailed improvement plans for literacy and the teaching of the links between sounds and spellings (phonics). As a result of the school's rapid response to inspection findings, there was clear evidence during the visit that actions taken had already helped the school to improve.

Governors attend the 'Challenge Board' meetings, convened by the local authority and they now play a more active role in monitoring improvement and challenging the headteacher; for example, governors examine pupils' books to check they are being marked and go on 'learning walks' with school leaders to gauge improvements to teaching. The school has acted decisively to strengthen the governing body through the appointment of a local librarian in order to keep a watchful eye on improvements in literacy. A parent governor, spoken to during my visit, spoke very highly of the school's positive response to the inspection. It was clear from her comments that the headteacher has quickly faced up to the challenge and has harnessed the skills and energies of all members of the school community to drive the school forward. Teaching staff are on board; they have quickly got behind school leaders and are committed to becoming a good school quickly. As a result, the school has made very good progress in tackling the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

The school's revised marking and feedback policy specifically addresses areas of weakness identified during the inspection. More importantly, my examination of pupils' work revealed that this policy was being universally applied; pupils endorsed this, adding that writing corrections in their books has really helped them to improve their spelling. Pupils also spoke very highly of the new 'reading corners'. These areas in the school are cosy, comfortable and inviting, encouraging pupils to read for pleasure; as one pupil commented, 'it really makes you want to read a book!'

According to information provided by the school, standards are set to rise this year with more pupils on target to make better than expected progress. Teachers check pupils' progress in phonics much more frequently than they did prior to the inspection. By doing so, they can spot when pupils are underachieving and put support in place more swiftly. Pupil groupings for phonics sessions have been changed, so that the work matches pupils' abilities more closely and targets weaknesses more effectively.

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**

The local authority provides 'light touch' support to Lister Juniors, because it has every confidence that the school is on the right track to improve quickly. Challenge Board meetings take place once per term and the school has productive links with a number of good schools in the locality.

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

Yours sincerely

Joan Bonenfant

**Her Majesty's Inspector**