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12 March 2014

Mrs Susan Roberts  
Headteacher  
Kilnhurst Primary School  
Hooton Road  
Kilnhurst  
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Dear Mrs Roberts

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kilnhurst Primary School, Rotherham**

Following my visit to your school on 11 March 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:

- ensure the school improvement plan includes appropriate targets for the achievement of each year group so that governors can check the school is on course to become a good school
- ensure governors systematically hold senior leaders accountable for the impact of actions in the school development plan, particularly the impact on pupil progress, each half-term.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, members of the governing body, including the Chair and a group of pupils. You accompanied me on a tour of the school in which we visited literacy and numeracy lessons and observed pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. I evaluated the school's planning for improvement, pupil progress data, minutes of governing body meetings and your termly reports to governors.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection the deputy headteacher has been released from his teaching commitment to focus fully on leadership and management responsibilities. A teacher has joined the school on a temporary contract to teach a Year 1 class. An additional teacher is currently being deployed to teach groups of pupils in Year 6 for two days a week. The vice-chair of governors has resigned and an acting vice-chair has been appointed.

## **Main findings**

Although disappointed with the outcome of the inspection in November 2013, you have responded quickly and rallied the staff effectively. There is a strong sense amongst staff and pupils that they are determined to become a good school at the next inspection. You have put in place detailed plans to address the areas for improvement and these are already having a positive impact, for example, in the significant improvements in the quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work seen across the whole school. The plans do not, however, include targets for achievement in each year group that would enable governors to check whether the school was on course to become a good school.

Pupils now take real pride in the presentation of their work. The regular handwriting sessions the school introduced to ensure pupils form letters correctly and write in a joined-up fluent style have rapidly brought about improvement. Pupils are also using their improved handwriting skills in other subjects and consequently the quality of presentation across the curriculum is much better. The Literacy Coordinator is also leading strategies to ensure pupils' writing topics appeal more to boys. Pupils told me they think literacy and numeracy lessons are more interesting. Projects such as 'mega-structures' in Year 2 and 'Cirque De Freak' in Year 6 have proved very engaging for boys.

You have made regular checks on the quality of teaching and have a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses. Where necessary you have put in place support plans and gone back to make further checks to see if improvements are being made. Teachers receiving support are responding well and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are being addressed. Your checks also identified the quality of marking was not as good as it should be. The new policy you have introduced has improved the effectiveness of marking. Pupils now routinely act upon the feedback they receive and this is helping them to improve their work. The impact of this can be seen, for example, in the improved quality of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

You have refined your systems for tracking pupils' progress and teachers are held accountable for progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils making slower progress receive additional teaching, either on a one-to-one basis or in small groups.

You have made changes to your termly report to the governing body and this now provides good quality information for governors. Consequently they are able to question and challenge senior leaders more effectively. Since the last inspection the Chair of governors has made frequent checks on the work of senior leaders, but there is no committee charged with regularly holding senior leaders accountable for the impact of actions in the school development plan.

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**

Senior leaders in the school are pleased with the level of support they receive from the local authority. A consultant has worked with the staff to improve the teaching of spelling. In addition, the school is making good use of professional development opportunities within the local learning community of schools and employed an independent consultant to develop approaches to improving handwriting and presentation. The review of the work of the governing body, undertaken by a National Leader of Governance, has already led to a number of positive improvements. A local authority representative has agreed to attend some governors' committee meetings which will check the impact of actions in the school development plan.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith

**Her Majesty's Inspector**