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13 March 2014

Michael Lansdown  
Headteacher  
Tanners Wood Junior Mixed and Infant School  
Hazelwood Lane  
Abbots Langley  
WD5 0LG

Dear Mr Lansdown

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Tanners Wood Junior Mixed and Infant School**

Following my visit to your school on 12 March 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 December 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:

- consolidate the monitoring of teaching so that:
  - it focuses more on accelerating pupils' learning and achievement
  - it evaluates clearly the progress made against pupils' starting point
  - it takes into account a wide range of evidence, including the impact of training on teachers' confidence and creativity, pupils' curiosity and eagerness to learn.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher. I met the local authority adviser and two governors, including the chair of the governing body. I evaluated the schools' post-Ofsted improvement plan and other documentation. We carried out brief visits to lessons and spoke to teachers and pupils about their work.

### **Main findings**

After the inspection, you took appropriate action to draw up a post-Ofsted improvement plan and tackle the weaknesses, particularly the progress of more able

pupils and expectations of what all pupils can achieve in lessons. The governors and your senior team check improvement through frequent reviews of the progress made against your key priorities. Pupils' attitudes to learning are further enhanced by teachers now giving more opportunities for pupils to ask questions and to find things out for themselves. As we visited classes, I noted that consistent approaches are used to ensure that pupils know exactly what they need to do during the lesson and what they need to do even better. When I asked a group of pupils whether they had noticed anything different since the inspection they said that more work was expected during the lesson and one added: *'the teacher pushes us to the limit'*. I saw strong focus on developing pupils' questioning skills and the *'perseverance thermometer'*, *'the captain challenge'* and the improved learning walls are good examples of new strategies intended to accelerate progress. Teachers welcome your reorganisation of the timetable because it gives them more quality time to practise extended writing. As I walked around the school, I saw that teachers are putting new ideas into practice as a result of professional development. Pupils were proud to show me how well they were doing.

With governors and senior leaders you are tackling weaknesses, rightly focusing on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Your improvement plan is fit for purpose and a range of helpful opportunities are identified for staff to develop their skills. Governors have allocated significant funds for staff training. They articulate clearly their intention to check whether this investment is having the intended positive impact on pupils' progress. Consequently, you need to ensure that the systems and the evidence you use to monitor the quality of teaching and learning are robust. With the support of the deputy headteacher, you are ensuring that lesson observation are helpful to staff. There is scope for you to improve the effectiveness of this work by promoting creativity in lesson planning, encouraging teachers to share best practice and show confidence in what they do so that the school makes rapid strides towards becoming a good or better school.

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 school welcomes the support that the local authority provides. The primary adviser visits regularly, as do the subject and Early Years advisers. It is too early to see the full impact of these interventions on pupils' achievement but, already, teachers plan more challenging work for their class and, in the Early Year Foundation Stage, careful consideration is given to the effective use of the indoor and outdoor areas. You receive support from an outstanding leader in education and links with local schools enable staff to share best practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Marianick Ellender-Gelé  
Her Majesty's Inspector