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27 March 2014

Miss Christine Barton  
Headteacher  
Dunton Green Primary School  
London Road  
Dunton Green  
Sevenoaks  
Kent TN13 2UR

Dear Miss Barton

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Dunton Green Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 27 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:

- make sure that teachers' performance targets reflect the specific progress that pupils in their classes must make to catch up any previous lost ground
- help teachers judge the progress that pupils make more reliably
- clarify what is expected of the deputy headteacher, governors and the local authority by planning next steps together
- extend the timeframe of the improvement plan and include quantifiable milestones to measure how much progress is being made
- ensure governors are well-informed to fulfil their role by being given the information they need, attending relevant training, including Ofsted events, and seeking support from a National Leader of Governance.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and your deputy headteacher, three members of the governing body and two representatives from the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We walked around the classrooms and I evaluated the schools' raising attainment plan. I looked at a range of documents that you provided for me which included minutes of governing body meetings, checks on pupils' progress, information about how staff performance is managed and notes of visits from the local authority adviser.

## **Context**

Significant changes to the leadership of the school are imminent. You are retiring at the end of next week after long service to the school as its headteacher. Your deputy will be leading the school until a new headteacher is appointed. The recruitment process is underway. Another experienced local headteacher will support and advise the deputy headteacher for one day each week until the new headteacher is appointed. There is now a full complement of governors.

## **Main findings**

Tensions between you and the governing body reported in the most recent inspection report are being resolved sensitively and governors are building relationships with the staff so the school is becoming better placed to improve more quickly. In readiness for the imminent changes, the deputy headteacher is taking the lead on the work to improve the school.

Since the last inspection a new plan for improvement has been written by the deputy headteacher which includes the right priorities and the targets to be achieved. However, it only includes actions until the end of this month and lacks clear milestones by which leaders and governors can measure the improvements that are being made and hold staff accountable for improving pupils' progress quickly.

Information about pupils' progress is collected and discussed more frequently. The deputy headteacher and special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) meet with teachers to discuss which pupils are progressing as expected and identify those who need extra help to catch up. Leaders know that not all teachers are able to make accurate judgements about how well pupils are learning so need further support and opportunities to work with teachers from other schools to check the reliability of their judgements.

Staff job descriptions have been updated and performance management arrangements amended so there is a clearer understanding of what is expected. Targets for teachers and teaching assistants have been changed so that they are more closely linked to the attainment and progress that pupils are expected to make every year. However, targets are not specific enough because they do take account

of the pupils who need to make more than the progress expected to catch up any previous lost ground in each class.

Appropriate steps have started to be taken to improve teachers' classroom practice and tackle any underperformance. Some training has been given to help teachers understand how to build pupils' understanding and skills step-by-step, particularly in mathematics. The school's records show that this is helping some teachers plan lessons that are pitched at the right level for pupils of different abilities but this is not yet embedded across the school.

The school's approach to marking pupils' work and giving feedback in lessons so that pupils know how to improve has been reconsidered. Additional reading and mathematics resources have been purchased to help motivate pupils. How behaviour in Key Stage 1 is managed at break times is being assessed to make sure that pupils come back into class more ready to learn. The difference that these actions have made on teaching and learning has yet to be fully evaluated.

Despite several requests, the governing body has not been given all the information it needs by leaders to hold the school accountable for improving pupils' achievements. Governors have a range of useful skills but would benefit from further training and support so that they know what information they should expect in order to fulfil their role.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. I will visit again in the summer term to review the improvements made to teaching, pupils' progress and the school improvement plan and check that governors are holding staff to account.

### **External support**

The local authority has given teachers some training to help them improve but has not observed whether the guidance is being put into practice. The governing body has purchased support from a consultant to help senior leaders monitor teaching and provide feedback to staff. School records show that some teaching is beginning to improve as a result but not consistently in all classes. Governing body links with another local governing body have been set up but are too new to have had an impact. The local authority, governors and deputy headteacher need to the plan next steps together so that there is clarity about what is expected of everyone for the school to move forward.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Corporate Director of Education, Learning and Skills for Kent.

Yours sincerely  
Jackie Krafft

**Her Majesty's Inspector**