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31 March 2014

Ms Claire Westcott  
Headteacher  
Meridian Community Primary School  
Roderick Avenue North  
Peacehaven  
East Sussex  
BN10 8BZ

Dear Ms Westcott

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Meridian Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 31 March 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2013.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, I met with you and the senior leaders, a representative from the local authority and the consultant headteacher. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plans were evaluated. I visited a range of lessons briefly with you to observe teaching and to talk to pupils, and scrutinised a selection of pupils' books. I reviewed the local authority's statement of action and your school improvement plan.

### **Context**

Since the inspection, one full-time and one part-time teacher have left the school; their classes are currently being taught by supply teachers. A consultant headteacher has been working in the school for two days a week since the inspection. In March 2014 the governing body was replaced by an Interim Executive Board (IEB) which has not yet met.

## **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

Senior leaders have a strong and well-shared vision for the school's improvement. They are clear about the need to set more rigorous priorities for their work, and have begun to analyse the impact of their actions more effectively. Since the inspection they have worked with renewed vigour and a sharper focus to effectively raise standards of teaching and learning in the school.

A sensible review by leaders of the teaching and learning policy, which now reflects national standards, has successfully made expectations more explicit to all teachers. Monitoring of teaching by the leadership team has become more intensive and feedback to teachers is now clearer, rightly linking the quality of teaching to its impact on pupils' progress.

Training for teachers from local authority consultants and school leaders is starting to improve teaching in almost all years, and to boost pupils' attainment. In Year 6, pupils are making better progress than in previous years, and robust assessment indicates that they will achieve significantly higher scores than Year 6 last year. However, these results are still below those expected nationally, which are as a result of a legacy of previously weak teaching. In Year 2, pupils are now making better progress and their attainment is in line with national expectations. These improvements are reflected in pupils' books which show improving marking and better work.

There has been a chequered history of collaboration with and support from the local authority. Since the inspection, the school has felt the very high levels of local authority intervention, while making an impact, are, at times, overwhelming and insensitive. This has not always helped the school's progress and should be reviewed. The local authority has confidence in the senior leaders to take the school forward, and reflected on clear improvements seen in a recent visit to the school. The consultant headteacher, who is a national leader of education (NLE), has provided valuable support in monitoring and improving teaching and supporting leadership development. Her expertise could be utilised even more productively by senior leaders.

Strengths in middle leadership have been further developed by the introduction of English and mathematics teams. These colleagues have carried out short lesson observations and their evaluations have fed back into improvements seen in the teaching of these subjects. Teachers are also re-energised by the challenges that face them, and are embracing opportunities to improve their teaching.

Useful systems to track the progress, behaviour and attendance of pupils have been honed and now inform lesson planning and intervention better. On our visits to

lessons, pupils were well engaged as a result of the new focus on learning behaviours, and of better teaching and more exciting topics.

The newly instigated IEB had only been in place for two days at the time of this inspection. The weaknesses noted in the inspection report remain in relation to governor oversight of the school, and it is an urgent priority that they improve the level of their support and challenge for the school.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, and the Director of Children's Services for East Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Anwar  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**