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Alison Hopley  
Headteacher  
Alderman Swindell Infant School  
Beresford Road  
Great Yarmouth  
NR30 4AB

Dear Ms Hopley

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Alderman Swindell Infant School**

Following my visit to your school on 30 April 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 not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- improve systems for checking pupils' work and recording progress by ensuring that all teachers accurately assess the progress that pupils are making in writing and use this information to set appropriately challenging tasks
- strengthen the school improvement plan by including quantifiable measures of success and clearer milestones to enable senior leaders, including governors, to measure progress
- improve the quality of teaching and learning by providing a programme of training opportunities for teachers and other adults who support learning in the school.

## **Evidence**

During the visit I met with you, four members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I evaluated the school improvement plan, along with other documentation. I visited all classes to observe teaching and learning. I also scrutinised samples of pupils' work from across the school.

## **Main findings**

You accepted the judgements from the last inspection and have begun to take action to address the weaknesses that were identified. Improvements have been made to provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage but, across the school, weaknesses remain and the changes that have been made have had limited impact. For example, a new marking policy has been introduced and this has helped to ensure that pupils' written work is now marked regularly. The quality of marking, however, is not good enough. As a result teachers do not have a clear understanding of each pupil's stage of development, particularly in writing, and pupils are not being told what they need to do to improve their work.

Lack of rigour, within assessment practices, means that the school is unable to accurately track the progress that pupils are making or set appropriate targets for improvement. As a result, school leaders are not able to demonstrate the progress that the school is making in addressing the issues identified at the previous inspection, particularly in mathematics and writing. On some occasions pupils are set targets to improve their work but this is not common practice across the school or even across year groups.

The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose. Although the plan identifies some of the actions that school leaders need to take in order for the school to become good, the plan lacks precise and measurable success criteria and timescales. It also fails to identify how the quality of teaching is going to be improved in order to raise achievement.

The Governing Body is beginning to play a more active role in school life. Governors accept, however, that they do not yet have effective systems in place for checking on the school's performance and holding school leaders to account for pupils' achievement. A review of governance is due to take place in the near future.

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**

At the time of the previous inspection the local authority was providing 'light touch' support to the school. It has now recognised the need to provide a greater level of support and challenge. A school improvement adviser is working with the school and recently some effective work has been carried out in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Further support is required, however, to improve the quality of teaching and the use of assessment across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**