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Mrs Anne Holmes  
Headteacher  
Milton Mount Primary School  
Grattons Drive  
Crawley  
RH10 3AG

Dear Mrs Holmes

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Milton Mount Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 21 May 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 February 2014. 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 that the next edition of the school improvement plan includes:
  - clear targets for pupils' progress: for each year and over their Key Stage
  - specific planning so that the most able pupils are challenged to reach their full potential
  - clear statements in relation to each activity, which describe what success will look like
  - clear plans for how senior leaders and governors will check for these signs of success
  - clear statements about how governors will validate the judgements they make, for example, through external advice, about how the activities in the plan are impacting on pupils' progress.

- Ensure that the governing body:
  - regularly reviews the progress pupils are making, and the school's improvement work, asking questions that hold school leaders to account
  - records these discussions.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you and deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and the vice-chair, and with a representative of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also met with a group of teachers who have leadership roles in the school. I visited all the classrooms and examined a range of documentation. This included the school's improvement plans, governing body records and reports from local authority advisory visits. I also looked at marking in some pupils' workbooks.

## **Context**

A teacher has left the school since the inspection. This class is being taught by a current member of staff in partnership with the deputy headteacher. A new assistant headteacher, with responsibility for mathematics, joined the school after the Easter holiday.

## **Main findings**

You and the deputy headteacher were quick to focus on the link between the inspection finding that pupils' progress is not consistent in all year groups, and quality of teaching. As a result, you immediately embarked on a detailed review across the whole school, leading to focussed training and development for teachers, which you matched to the strengths and weaknesses you found. You have continued to develop the way that the school checks how good teaching is, and this is beginning to include classroom visits by team leaders.

I saw in my classroom visits and when I looked at pupils' books, that this approach has clearly provided challenge and support to staff and is making a difference. All teachers are now thinking more carefully, for example, about the way they use questions with pupils, in their marking and in their use of display. You now expect teachers to set out clearly in their planning, the learning which will be done as a whole class together, and that which will be accomplished by pupils working individually or in groups. As a result, in all the classrooms, I saw pupils being taught at the right level by a teacher or teaching assistant, while others were working purposefully away from an adult. In Year 4 for example, I saw the teacher teaching a large proportion of the class, while a group of more able pupils worked separately

on a challenging number problem. On the other hand, in Year 2, the teacher was working with a small group, while the rest of the class were getting on well with their writing. Behaviour was good in all the classrooms because everyone was interested and engaged in their learning.

You have improved the skills of teachers who are team leaders. As a result, they are fully aware of their remit to ensure consistency in teaching across their year group and to check the progress of pupils. Under their leadership, year teams now plan more effectively together, and team leaders support individual teachers to refine this group planning, to meet the specific needs of their own class. Team leaders now work more closely together themselves. Recently, they collaborated to check the work in pupils' books and teachers' marking. They are beginning to provide reports at regular intervals about pupils' progress in their year group and the quality of teaching.

You have reviewed the school's policy for marking, and teachers are working hard to put the new guidelines in place. Marking now includes more detail about what pupils have done well, with increasing guidance about what they need to do to improve. All teachers allow time for pupils to read and respond to this feedback and there is growing evidence of pupils writing back to their teachers. In some classes, pupils have new opportunities to mark their own work or to make comments on the work of their peers. This shows separately in red pen, done respectfully and with thought.

All this work has been organised in line with the school's "post Ofsted action plan". This document reflects most areas for improvement identified in the inspection report, and includes relevant actions. The plan also makes it clear who is responsible for leading each aspect. However, it does not set out specific targets for pupils' progress, and there is not enough information about how the school will check and measure success. The requirement to improve levels of challenge for the most able pupils is overlooked. It is disappointing that the local authority did not pick up these omissions when discussing the draft plan with the school.

The governing body is fully committed to securing the required improvement. Governors have discussed the inspection findings and the school's improvement plans. However, records of governors' meetings do not show governors discussing pupils' progress or holding school leaders to account through focussed questions. The governing body has set up small groups to check progress in specific areas and each group has developed its own mini action plan. While these mini plans have a purpose, their separation from the main school improvement plan is not helpful.

## **External support**

The school values the support it has received from the local authority, which has involved a series of consultant visits, with training for teachers and team leaders. The consultant who works with the school has provided timely and expert support for senior leaders to develop the school's system for tracking and analysing pupils' progress.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Siân Thornton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**