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16 May 2014

Mr Mark Alston  
Headteacher  
Holme-upon-Spalding Moor Primary School  
High Street  
Holme-upon-Spalding Moor  
York  
North Yorkshire  
YO43 4HL

Dear Mr Alston

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Holme-upon-Spalding Moor Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 May 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in February 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, the Specialist Leader of Education (SLE) supporting the school with mathematics and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

### **Context**

There have been no changes in the context of the school since the February inspection.

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

The early acknowledgement by the headteacher that issues are more deep rooted than he first thought has necessitated a more effective partnership with the local authority than has been evident in the past. Together, a joint action plan has been developed and a clear direction for improvement established. Leaders are aware that in their race to set out actions, the plan does not have a clear enough focus on how the impact of the collective work will be measured over time. Consequently, the headteacher and local authority advisers are currently refining the plan to include more measurable targets for success in order to help leaders and governors know whether actions are making a quick enough difference.

Support from a Local Leader of Education (LLE) has been prompt in establishing a stronger system for tracking pupils' progress. Staff are already being held more accountable for the information this new system is yielding and expectations of what pupils can achieve are beginning to rise. However, the system will be only as effective as the quality of information being entered into it. At present, there are wide variations in assessment practice across the school, some inaccurate assessment of pupils' work and, therefore, a lack of clarity around the specific gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Until this is addressed, the new tracking system will not be as useful as it needs to be in driving improvements to teaching.

Governors have been swift in commissioning an external review of their practice. An audit of governors' skills is now driving future rounds of recruitment to address gaps in expertise. The recently convened pupil progress committee has heightened its challenge to leaders around the impact of new initiatives and protocols for gaining more first-hand information through school visits are being refined. Governors have welcomed the greater direction the review has given to their work. They are rightly aware that more specific targets within the school action plan would enable them to challenge senior leaders more rigorously about the impact of planned actions.

Local authority support has focused both on developing the systems for effective leadership and engaging the expertise of a range of school-based professionals, including an LLE and SLE, to address weaknesses in teaching. Further partnership working with an outstanding primary school is also planned for the coming terms to enable staff to observe best practice. Joint moderation of assessments should be built into this model at the earliest opportunity.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

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

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director for Children, Family and Schools for East Riding of Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lee Owston  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**