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Ms Karen Allan  
Headteacher  
Whitecote Primary School  
Wellington Grove  
Bramley  
Leeds  
West Yorkshire  
LS13 2LQ

Dear Ms Allan

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Whitecote Primary School, Leeds**

Following my visit to your school on 18 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 March 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:

- develop the new senior leadership team by establishing links with good and outstanding schools in order to share best practice
- ensure all teachers have a secure and shared understanding of the characteristics of highly effective learning and teaching and what this looks like in lessons and pupils' work.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, conversations were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, a group of pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority. I evaluated the school improvement plan. In addition we undertook a tour of the school to look

briefly at teaching and learning and the changes made to provision since the inspection.

## **Context**

The deputy head has retired and a new leadership structure has been put in place

## **Main findings**

You and your staff have made a highly effective start to getting your school to good. This is because you have built on the work started before the last inspection, sharpened the focus of that work and successfully engaged key people in the process. For instance, school improvement plans are readily accessible to all staff and governors on-line and are regularly updated and reviewed. You are ambitious to get to good and have set a challenging time scale in which to achieve this.

The school has rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching the pupils receive and maximising the rate of progress all pupils make. For instance the introduction of new approaches to planning, marking pupils' work and taking pupils' responses into account is helping teachers to plan lessons and set work at the right level. As a result pupils feel that lessons are now more interesting and that they work harder. This is because they know more clearly what they need to do next to improve their learning and what to do if they have difficulties. As a result pupils' progress is accelerating.

Systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning have been sharpened. There are regular checks on how well pupils are achieving and increasingly staff are held to account for the progress their pupils are making. 'Hub' meetings held with staff every two weeks contribute to ensuring work in pupils' books is marked effectively and best practice can be developed and shared. Recent reviews carried out across the school with the local authority show that these actions are beginning to improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, there is not yet sufficient evidence of teaching that is consistently outstanding.

The new senior leadership team has worked well to establish and clarify their roles and responsibilities. They contribute to identifying school improvement priorities and monitoring the impact of planned improvements in the classroom. They increasingly lead on setting targets for teachers and have a good overview of how well pupils are progressing. School leaders have sharpened their monitoring routines and the rigour by which they hold teachers to account. As a new team they recognise a need to develop their roles further by sharing best practice with other good and outstanding schools.

The revised school improvement plan addresses the areas that need improvement and is suitably underpinned with a separate action plan focused on improving learning. There are clear success criteria by which governors can track the progress

the school is making. Milestones are in place and have a focus on pupils at risk of not doing so well and those that can make better than expected progress. This helps governors to pinpoint with accuracy how well the school is improving over time.

Governors know the school well and are aware of what the school needs to do to get to good. They are addressing the issues raised in the last inspection including undergoing a review of provision for pupil premium pupils with the help of an outstanding school leader. In addition they have carried out an audit of their own effectiveness which has led to a detailed plan of action being put in place. They are well placed to monitor and challenge school leadership and ensure the continuous development of the school.

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**

The local authority has supported you well in evaluating the impact of recent actions, identifying where further refinement is needed and finding additional support.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Brown

**Her Majesty's Inspector**