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23 June 2014

Becky Sharp  
Headteacher  
Oaklands Primary School  
Oaklands Lane  
Biggin Hill  
Westerham  
TN16 3DN

Dear Miss Sharp

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Oaklands Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 23 June 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 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:

- ensure that all teaching is good or better so that pupils make consistent progress throughout the school.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other leaders, pupils and three members of the governing body. I had telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and the Executive Principal of Pickhurst Junior Academy, who is a National Leader of Education. I evaluated the school

improvement plan. I made a short tour of the school, and we both looked at a sample of pupils' literacy and mathematics books.

## **Context**

There have been no changes to the school's staff since the inspection. Three teachers will be leaving the school at the end of the summer term. Two teachers have been promoted to senior leadership roles and a deputy headteacher has been appointed. As the school is growing in numbers, an additional teacher has been appointed.

## **Main findings**

Since the last inspection, leaders have acted quickly to tackle the areas identified for improvement. The school's action plan is detailed and focused on key priorities. It lays out clearly the actions needed to bring about sustainable improvement, but is not specific about who is responsible for leading each action.

Leaders have rightly focussed on ensuring that a full senior leadership team is in place for the start of the new academic year in September 2014. The headteacher and governors have taken rapid action to ensure that key leaders play a greater role in improving the quality of teaching. Responsibilities have begun to be delegated so that the leadership of the school is spread among a larger group of staff. Leaders have shared their expertise, taught groups of pupils in need of additional support and checked more frequently on the progress that pupils are making. They have also worked with groups of more-able pupils to ensure that they are appropriately challenged.

Teachers have identified additional opportunities for pupils to practise their writing in subjects other than English. Leaders understand the need for pupils to develop their speaking and listening, and reading skills so that they can become better writers. Lessons to develop pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation have been introduced at an earlier stage. As a result pupils have a better understanding of the technical aspects of language. For example, pupils in Year 4 identify embedded clauses in text. Opportunities for extended writing are now more frequent, giving pupils the opportunity to apply their technical skills.

All teachers have met with the headteacher to review their performance, and to identify strengths and areas for development. The headteacher has a good understanding of teachers' development needs. Tailored support programmes are in place to develop teachers' practice. The school's information about how well pupils are doing suggests that pupils are making more rapid progress than before the inspection.

Pupils say that the work their teachers give them is challenging and that teachers know what each pupil is capable of achieving. They feel that they get the support they need to achieve well. The most-able pupils are responding very positively to the support they receive to help them aim for Level 6 in maths, writing, reading and grammar. In Year 6, pupils reflect on the vocabulary they use, improving punctuation and sentence construction as they edit their work.

Leaders have made effective use of a specialist mathematics teacher to support other teachers in the school. She has provided effective training to help teachers provide greater challenge for more-able pupils. Pupils' books and displays of work around the school show that there are now more regular opportunities to solve mathematical problems and challenges. However, sometimes the level of challenge is not well-judged and the work is too hard.

Leaders and governors, in collaboration with the parents and friends association, have been successful in identifying funding to install a wireless network throughout the school. Electronic tablets have been purchased and will be ready for use at the start of the new academic year. Clear plans are in place to use this equipment to support pupils' learning throughout the curriculum.

Governors are proactive in their approach. They have arranged to review the structure of their committees and the way they organise their work. Recruitment procedures have been strengthened. The robust selection process for teachers gives governors and leaders greater confidence in the quality of appointments.

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**

A National Leader of Education (NLE) has been supporting the headteacher. He has worked with the headteacher to provide both support and challenge for teachers to improve their practice. He has checked pupils' progress during joint activities with the headteacher. This has included evaluating the information leaders collect about pupils' progress. As a result the school has a clear understanding of its performance and of the expectations teachers have of pupils. Four teachers have received training at the NLE's academy and support has been planned for a newly qualified teacher who will be joining the staff in September 2014. The NLE has worked with the headteacher to develop the new leadership structure. Responsibilities of senior leaders are clear and closely linked to improving pupils' achievement.

The local authority has maintained an overview of the support provided to the school. A school improvement officer from the local authority has provided support for the teaching of English and mathematics. She has also provided training for the

support of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. As a result teachers have a better understanding of what constitutes good teaching and of the way work should be planned for pupils of different abilities. The local authority has also provided support for the appointment of staff and for the school's improvement planning.

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

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Loukes  
**Seconded Inspector**