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24 June 2014

Cathryn Tompkins  
Headteacher  
Tor Bridge Primary School  
Miller Way  
Plymouth  
PL6 8UJ

Dear Ms Tompkins

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Tor Bridge 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:

- strengthen the ability of the governing body to challenge the work of the school by providing further training, for example through attendance at a 'Getting to Good' seminar organised by Ofsted
- increase the membership of the governing body
- add greater detail to the school action plan to show how the governing body will monitor the planned improvements.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated and I toured the school and looked at some examples of pupils' work.

## **Main findings**

Since the section 5 inspection in March, you and your leadership team and staff have taken a range of suitable actions to improve the school. The recent inspection report has been used positively to involve staff in an evaluation of the school's work. The action plan focuses on all the areas for improvement identified in the recent inspection. It contains clear targets with a suitable timescale for action and allocates the financial resources needed to support the planned changes. Arrangements for including the governing body in monitoring the plan lack detail.

Staff have attended training to develop their understanding of why boys underachieve. Ideas that engage boys more effectively are being included in the curriculum. For example, an illustrator has visited the school and worked with boys to help inspire creative writing. Improved arrangements for marking pupils' work are being trialled in two classes prior to adoption across the school in September. More robust work scrutiny has been introduced which involves pupils more closely in discussing their progress. Changes in the allocation of class teachers have been agreed for September in order to strengthen teaching in Key Stage 2. Teachers are sharing best practice more effectively to plan for pupils' individual needs and provide more challenge for the most able pupils.

There has been an external review of the governing body which has included an audit of governors' skills. Governors have received training to improve their understanding of data on pupil achievement and they have drawn up a development plan to increase their effectiveness in holding the school to account. The governing body also has responsibility for a special school which shares the same site as Tor Bridge School. There have been changes recently in the membership of the governing body and there are currently some vacancies. Providing governance for two schools is presenting a challenge, especially while there is a reduced membership, and some monitoring arrangements are underdeveloped. The governing body would benefit from up-to-date training to help strengthen its role in challenging the school's performance and governors plan to attend in the near future a 'Getting to Good' seminar organised by Ofsted.

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 school has had effective support from the local authority to help draft the action plan, arrange training for the governing body and provide funding towards implementation of the action plan. The impact of support is evident in the changes to teaching and learning and the governing body's clearer understanding of its role. Links have been established with two high performing schools with plans to share good practice in teaching and learning in September 2014.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redpath  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**