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9 July 2014

Veronica Farrelly  
Headteacher  
Holland Park Primary School  
Holland Road  
Clacton-on-Sea  
CO15 6NG

Dear Mrs Farrelly

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Holland Park Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 8 July 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 January 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with you and deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated. We looked at records of lesson observations and data on pupils' achievement. Together with the deputy headteacher, we observed teaching in all 14 classes, with a particular focus on the quality of pupils' writing.

### **Context**

The long-serving headteacher retires at the end of the academic year. A new headteacher has been appointed and will start in September.

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

The school leadership team has made a good start in addressing the areas for improvement from the inspection. They have been instrumental in improving the

quality of teaching and accelerating pupils' progress. They make much better use of a wide range of data on pupils' progress and attainment. They are using this information increasingly effectively to identify pupils at risk of underachievement and to put support in place. The impact of these interventions is now more carefully monitored so that the school can evidence how much difference they are making to pupils' achievement. For example, the school can point to the success of additional support for some pupils in Year 3 on accelerating their progress in writing. Across the school, pupils are now doing better in reading, writing and mathematics. There have been good gains in the ability of younger pupils to link letters and their sounds, which will stand them in good stead as they hone their reading and writing skills.

The school's improvement planning is closely linked to the outcomes from the last inspection and dovetails very well with the local authority statement of action. There are clear timescales, regular updates on how well things are going and explicit, measurable targets for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The improvement plan is a useful vehicle for planning and monitoring school improvement. The clear timescales and measurable targets will enable the governing body to hold the school to account for pupils' achievement.

The school's records of observations of teaching paint an improving picture. This view is consistent with the findings of the recent local authority review, which found that no teaching is inadequate and more is good. The school now monitors the quality of teaching more frequently and has refined its recording pro-forma so that there is a clearer focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. Not all observers are doing this as explicitly as they should, so it is not always clear how much progress pupils have made in the lesson observed. Not all observers routinely include a comment on areas for improvement from previous observations.

The quality of marking has improved considerably. The school has increased its expectations of what high-quality marking includes and is allowing time for pupils to respond and to discuss their work with teachers. Pupils know how well they are doing and what their targets are but not all are clear about what they have to do to reach them. Expectations of pupils' writing are rising, with consistently good use of displays to exemplify rising expectations and celebrate success. Improving the quality of pupils' handwriting is likely to take a bit longer. Pupils are eager to learn and are more than ready to respond positively to better teaching and higher expectations. The school's recent success in a national writing competition will result in a day out on a Thames barge for the talented writers involved.

The governing body was identified as a strength in the last inspection report and this continues to be the case. Governors are passionate about improving the life chances of pupils at the school and have been determined in their pursuit of the right training and advice to enable them to hold the school to account. They have valued the training and support from Essex Governor Services. They have a good understanding of how well groups of pupils are doing and have strengthened the partnership with

parents through the publication of a half-termly governors' newsletter and by starting a process of consultation on how to improve further.

The local authority is providing a range of effective support to improve the quality of teaching and enhance leadership and management. Support from the local authority's Standards and Excellence Primary Commissioner, who is the link member of staff from the authority, has been regular and effective. There has also been good support from advisory teachers and other advisers to support subject leadership and improve the quality of teaching. The recent local authority review provides a useful benchmark for how well the school is doing. The school has formed a valued informal partnership with an outstanding Essex school so that best practice can be shared.

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 of Children's Services for Essex local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lovett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**