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25 June 2014

Mr Dove  
Marvels Lane Primary School  
Riddons Road  
Grove Park  
London  
SE12 9RA

Dear Mr Dove

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Marvels Lane Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 25 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 February 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:

- increase the pace of change and planning for improvement by establishing stronger links with other local schools, to learn from their strengths as well as to work together on shared issues.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, a group of middle leaders, members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school's action plans were evaluated.

We also undertook a short tour of the school, focusing on changes to marking and feedback since the last inspection.

## **Main findings**

You have developed a very detailed action plan for improvement since the last inspection. A summative document is supported by 14 other plans. While there is a great deal of detail in these plans, they lack clarity and do not currently show how your improvement work will be monitored or evaluated. Involvement by governors, as described by your plans, is limited.

The plans are, however, closely aligned to the areas of improvement identified at the last inspection. The school self-review document lags behind the changes being undertaken and still reflects the school's view before the inspection. The quality of planning, as it currently stands, may slow the pace of progress.

As a result of this lack of clarity through the review and planning process, the governing body does not have the information it needs to support school improvement and challenge senior leaders. However, governors recognise this and are very clear about the need to further develop their roles. They spoke with authority about the need to improve their understanding of the school. Governors are undertaking additional training and are clear that they must be more evaluative and measure the impact of their work within the school. They have begun to ask proactively for the information they require. A new policy has been agreed, formulating the procedure to be followed when teaching requires improvement. This policy has been written at the request of governors.

A review of governance has been commissioned and is due to begin on 21 July 2014.

You have restructured some aspects of leadership and management within the school. You have moved away from a flat leadership structure and introduced a new middle management tier. Middle leaders are now actively involved in the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. Middle and senior leaders regularly review pupils' work and information on pupil progress and they also conduct joint observations with senior leaders. As a result of this, the understanding of key areas of development and the necessary steps to improve are more quickly identified.

A change to the structure of staff meetings means that once a staff development need is identified, training is more immediate. For example, marking and the presentation of books were identified as needing urgent improvement. New guidance was issued and training provided quickly to all teaching staff. As a result of this, there is a significant improvement in the quality of marking and the development of pupils' response to their teachers' comments. Middle and senior leaders have ensured consistency of approach through a regular monitoring process.

Middle leaders who are new to their role have been given specific coaching by senior leaders with regard to observing learning. There is no wider development programme in place at this time. The local authority will support the school in brokering links with other schools to provide for this opportunity.

It is clear that there are already improvements to pupil progress and attainment. Your own tracking data shows that there is likely to be an improvement in the number of pupils reaching the pass mark for the Year 1 phonics check. Information collected within the school also shows improvements to attainment and progress in Year 2 and Year 6. These assessments have been subject to external moderation.

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**

As a result of the recent inspection, the local authority has doubled the amount of time they will provide to the school to support school improvement. The local authority has also moderated teacher assessments in early years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

The local authority's strategic lead for primary schools has also provided additional support for the development of leadership and management. The local authority is willing to support you to broker school to school support via a National Leader in Education and closer links to other successful local schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Kevin Flanagan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**