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16 July 2014

Miss Ashman  
Headteacher  
Moat Primary School  
Juniper Avenue  
Gloucester  
GL4 6AP

Dear Miss Ashman

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

Following my visit to your school on Wednesday 16 July 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 April 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:

- make sure that boys achieve as well as girls by planning activities that inspire and motivate them
- ensure that those pupils with special educational needs who are supported through school action are achieving in line with their capabilities
- extend the knowledge and skills of the teachers by linking with schools outside their immediate community and attending the Getting to Good, Better English and Better Mathematics conferences run by Her Majesty's Inspectors for schools that require improvement
- display the amount of learning days lost so that families fully understand the impact poor attendance has on their children.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the subject leaders for numeracy and literacy, two governors, one of whom was the Chair of the Governing body, and a representative of the local authority. In each meeting we discussed the action taken since the last inspection and its impact so far. The improvement plan was evaluated. I undertook a learning walk with you around the school and visited all the classrooms.

## **Context**

Since the inspection the subject leaders for literacy and numeracy have returned from maternity leave and two teaching assistants have been appointed. One member of staff is on maternity leave and another is leaving at the end of this term. Two newly qualified teachers have been appointed on a fixed term contract for the start of the new academic term.

## **Main findings**

The very recent return of the subject leaders for literacy and numeracy has strengthened the leadership team. They are proactively engaged in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in the pupils' books and have checked teachers planning to ensure activities set are well-matched to the pupils' needs and sufficiently challenging. Appropriate plans to observe lessons and improve the quality of teaching are already well underway for next term.

Since the inspection pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 have been grouped according to their ability when they learn about letters and the sounds they make. This is providing better support for individual pupils. Results in the most recent Year 1 screening check for letters and sounds have significantly improved and are above average. Nevertheless, standards remain low in the rest of the school.

Results from the most recent end of Year 6 tests indicate a dip in standards from 2013. Two-thirds of this cohort has special educational needs and a significant proportion of this cohort joined the school mid-way through their primary education. Nevertheless, as they have moved up through the school, they have experienced too much teaching that requires improvement. This has meant that these pupils have not made enough progress. Changes have been made to the staffing structure in preparation for the new academic year. For example, two very experienced teachers returning from maternity leave will teach Years 5 and 6. By appointing another two new teachers, leaders are working hard to develop a keen and cohesive team. By holding weekly joint planning sessions to check what the pupils will be learning, teaching staff are now supporting each other to produce good quality lessons where objectives are clear and measureable.

Since the inspection there is a greater emphasis on using resources around the classroom to support pupils' learning. By introducing interesting topics and practical activities where there are opportunities for the pupils to apply their new knowledge and skills, there is now more engagement and participation in lessons. The recent development of homework packs for pupils to take home over the summer break and the response to the newly introduced competitive 'spelling bees' have been well-received by the children and their parents and carers. The 'spelling bees' have already helped the pupils to spell correctly and it is hoped that the homework packs will encourage the children to continue learning throughout the long summer break.

During the learning walk around the school all pupils were actively engaged in their learning and attitudes in the lessons were positive. Nevertheless, despite a greater emphasis on the importance of regular attendance through posters, discussions at parents meetings and letters home, it remains a significant issue for some families. The appointment of a learning mentor and the opening of a class at the start of the new academic year to nurture vulnerable children, has been planned to support those families who have attendance problems. Professional help from within the local cluster group is also being used to improve attendance.

The highly experienced Chair of the Governing Body, brought into guide the school out of serious weaknesses, has maintained a close watch on the work of the school. Governors have a good understanding of the progress the pupils are making, in particular those in receipt of additional government funding. They are knowledgeable, astute and have full involvement in the school's journey of improvement. Regular visits into lessons ensure that they have a good understanding of what is going on and governors proudly report that behaviour has much improved since the last inspection. They have secured a strong teaching staff for the next academic year to ensure that improvements are accelerated.

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 continues to provide well-measured support and keeps a close eye on the school. The regular progress meetings held between the local authority and the school ensure that there is no slippage with the ongoing journey of improvement. The local authority has paid for an experienced headteacher to support the headteacher. This help has been invaluable and has given the headteacher greater confidence and experience. The local authority has also funded the training for a learning mentor in preparation for the opening of a nurture class at the start of next academic year. In addition to this, local authority funding has been sensitively used to train staff to resolve situations where there is conflict between pupils. The local authority recognises the need for all staff members to extend their links beyond the immediate community and share wider expertise. A sensible start

would be attendance at the conferences run by Her Majesty's Inspectors to support schools which require improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone

**Her Majesty's Inspector**