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Mrs Susan Ridge
Headteacher
St Giles' CofE Primary School
Blanche Lane
South Mimms
Potters Bar
EN6 3PE

Dear Mrs Ridge

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Giles' CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 23 September 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 May 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 school improvement plan by including clearer milestones and success criteria to enable senior leaders to measure progress
- improve the effectiveness of the governing body in reviewing and evaluating leadership and teaching
- improve the indoor environment within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Evidence

During the inspection I held meetings with you and senior leaders to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also held a telephone conversation with the Chair of the Governing Body. I evaluated the school's improvement plan and other

documentation. I also accompanied you on brief visits to all classes, where I looked at pupils' books and I spoke to them about their work. I also talked with pupils in the dining room and on the playground.

Context

Since the previous inspection the assistant headteacher has left the school and two teachers have been appointed to leadership positions on a temporary basis. A newly qualified teacher has been appointed.

Main findings

Although disappointed with the outcome of the previous inspection you accepted that the judgements made were accurate and have taken action to address the weaknesses that were identified. You are monitoring the quality of teaching and learning closely. Since the inspection you have observed all teachers on at least one occasion and you have made regular checks on teachers' planning and pupils' work. You are using the information from this monitoring activity to identify strengths and areas for further development. The end of key stage results, in 2014, indicates that achievement is improving. However you accept that the improvements that have been made need to be sustained and remaining weaknesses addressed before teaching or achievement at the school can be judged as good.

Following the inspection you developed a plan to address the weaknesses that were identified. The plan lists the actions that the school needs to take to become good. However, it lacks milestones with clear, precise and measurable success criteria. This means that school leaders, including governors, will find it difficult to establish whether the actions that are being taken are effective.

During my visit, pupils' behaviour was exemplary, both within classrooms and around the school. Pupils are respectful towards adults and interact well with each other while learning and playing. The school provides a stimulating environment, particularly outdoors where pupils regularly have lessons in the Forest School. However, the indoor environment within the Early Years Foundation Stage is cluttered and not conducive to effective learning.

Governors acknowledge that they need to be more effective in holding school leaders to account for the performance of staff and the achievement of pupils. A review of governance has recently been completed and an action plan is being developed to address the areas requiring improvement.

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 has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It has been closely involved in monitoring the school's performance recently and has provided school leaders with clear guidance about what needs to be done in order for the school to be judged as good at the next inspection. The local authority will be undertaking a review of the school's progress later this term.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Hertfordshire and the the Director of Education for the Diocese of St Albans.

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow
Her Majesty's Inspector