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29 September 2014

Mrs Sarah Coxell  
Headteacher  
Fox Hill Primary School  
Pondmoor Road  
Bracknell  
RG12 7JZ

Dear Mrs Coxell

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Fox Hill Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 24 September 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 second 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 as soon as possible to:

- update the school development plan so it is clear what needs to happen, when and how progress will be checked, and ensure systems are in place to keep the plan on track
- set targets for pupils' achievement, so that teachers are clear what each pupil in their class should achieve by the end of the school year

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I looked at evidence of the school's work since my last monitoring visit,

and the draft action plan. We walked around school together to see the classes at work.

## **Context**

The headteacher and deputy left at the end of last school year, as planned, as did the special educational needs coordinator. You joined the school at the beginning of September and an acting deputy headteacher, appointed from within the staff took up post at the same time. Three new classteachers joined the school at the beginning of term; one has since left. The Chair of Governors retired last term; a new Chair and Vice Chair of Governors have recently been elected.

## **Main findings**

You have wasted no time tackling matters in the short time you have been at the school. Your top priority is making sure that teaching and learning are consistently good or better. You have shared your expectations with staff and pupils and spent time in each class to check how good teaching is. It was evident from our visits to classes that you already have a clear picture of where it is stronger and where it needs to improve. As a result, you are targeting support where it is most needed. It is too soon, however, to see any marked overall improvement. We discussed the importance of taking account of pupils' achievement as the year progresses to gain a picture of the quality of teaching over time.

At my last visit I stressed the need for a strong leadership team to share the load for improving the school. The long-term structure cannot be confirmed until a permanent deputy headteacher is appointed. You have already re-advertised the position and in the meantime have begun to work with the acting deputy to monitor teaching. You have acted quickly to negotiate external support to manage provision for pupils with special educational needs in the short term and to create the role of phase leaders responsible for teams of staff. It is too early to see any real impact. The new team has only been in place for a couple of weeks and the acting deputy is teaching fulltime at the moment to cover a vacancy.

You have involved all staff and governors in agreeing the over-riding aim for this school year: to get the school back to good. There is general consensus as to what needs to improve, particularly writing and mathematics, and the training that staff need. Last year's school development plan has been used as a basis for an action plan for this term. The plan is adequate for the moment, but not specific enough about what needs to be done and when over the course of the year. It needs updating to take account of the analysis of 2014 data, set clear milestones to check progress and measurable targets for the end of the year. It is important that actions are carefully mapped out to avoid overload and that it is monitored closely to avoid slippage.

You have identified the need to look at information about pupils' progress with teachers so that they know how well their pupils are doing and to set targets. The local authority has offered to support these meetings. It is crucial that the discussions take place as soon as possible. Teachers need to be in no doubt what their pupils should achieve by the end of the year.

An external review of governance and the use of pupil premium funding took place last term. Governors fully accept the findings and recognise they must challenge as well as support the school. They have reviewed the brief for the renamed Curriculum and Standards Committee to hold senior leaders to account for the quality of education and pupils' achievement. The new Chair and Vice Chair are more aware of the information they need and are working with you to agree what should be included in your reports. They have received some early information about the use of pupil premium funding last year. Training on the use of data for all governors is planned for next month. As the latest published data are for 2013, it is important the school's most recent information is used so that governors have an up to date picture of achievement.

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**

You really appreciate the support the local authority is providing, both directly and through its arrangements for the headteacher of a local outstanding school to be your mentor. You feel it has been prompt, timely and well-focused on your needs as a new headteacher and those of the school. In particular, you are grateful for the additional support the other school has been able to give for special educational needs provision and improving teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Bradley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**