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30 September 2014

Miss Ellen Gascoigne  
Headteacher  
Sutton-on-Trent Primary School  
Church Street  
Sutton-on-Trent  
Newark  
NG23 6PD

Dear Miss Gascoigne

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sutton-on-Trent Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 29 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2013. 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 school improvement planning to ensure that actions are more precisely targeted to address the school's weaknesses, and there are clearer systems of accountability, by:
  - focusing the plans more specifically on raising attainment in mathematics, in Key Stage 1, to increase the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 to at least the national level
  - stating clearly in the plans who will monitor, and separately who will evaluate the impact, of each action, and when and how they will do it.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the leadership team for literacy, a representative of the governing body, and a representative working on behalf of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Documents showing the outcomes of leaders' monitoring activities, and also work in pupils' books, were scrutinised with senior leaders.

## **Main findings**

You, and your leadership team, continue to take effective actions to improve the school. Pupil outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2, in 2014, show that pupils made much better progress in mathematics and reading, than in 2013. Consequently, all pupils in Year 6, in 2014, reached the expected Level 4 in these subjects. The progress pupils made in developing writing skills was less strong. However, work in pupils' books, in the majority of classes across the school, show that the quality of writing is improving quickly. You, and your leadership team, have defined a clear pathway for continued improvement in the development of pupils' writing skills.

You recognise that pupils should be making better progress in Key Stage 1; particularly in developing their mathematics skills. In 2014, no pupils in Year 2 achieved the higher level 3 in mathematics. We agreed that this is simply not good enough for your school. Although your school improvement plans identify improvements to be made in mathematics provision in general, actions do not specifically target the development of mathematics in Key Stage 1. We discussed some possible strategies, and you have agreed to work with your leadership team to improve the school's action plan, to identify how you will tackle this issue.

A number of improvements are evident in your school, since the last inspection. For example, your systems to set targets for pupils, to help identify the next steps of learning they need to take, are beginning to make a positive impact on learning. Pupils engage with their targets, and teachers' written comments about their work, very positively. Teaching assistants now play a more active role in assessing pupils' learning, and sharing information about learning with teachers. Attractive displays around the school effectively help to build the profile of writing, through the celebration of children's high quality work. Work in pupils' books is usually very well presented, and shows that almost all pupils take pride in their work.

Representatives of the governing body provide you, and other leaders, with a range of appropriate challenge and support. Governors visit the school quite frequently to help to monitor the effectiveness of the school. However, systems of accountability are not always made clear to staff in the school's improvement plan. Although a separate 'monitoring plan' exists, arrangements about who will monitor actions (check that they are being completed), and, separately, who will evaluate the impact of actions, are not always clear. You have agreed to work with your leaders, including the governing body, to sharpen your plans, and identify a fair and

appropriate distribution of monitoring and evaluation activities between leaders. We agreed that the school improvement plan should state clearly 'who' will monitor, and separately, evaluate the impact, of each action, and 'when' and 'how' they will do this.

You have agreed to submit your revised school improvement plan to me by 7 November 2014, at the latest. To help ensure that I keep up-to-date with developments at the school, you have agreed to forward me copies of each of your 'headteachers' reports to the governing body', prior to your next section 5 inspection. I will be looking closely at the information you share with governors about your progress against the action plan, and also for information about the rate of improvement in pupils' 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 continue to work effectively with other local schools, and with a representative working on behalf of the local authority. These arrangements have enabled you to participate in a broad range of training, and also to moderate the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' work. External support has also played a key role in influencing your reorganisation of subject leadership. Staff are responding positively to a system of 'team', rather than 'individual', responsibility for managing a subject.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Director of Children's Services for Nottinghamshire local authority.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Spencer  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**