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3 October 2014

Mrs Clare Daddy  
Headteacher  
Thornbury Primary School  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire  
BD3 7AU

Dear Mrs Daddy

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Thornbury Primary School, Bradford**

Following my visit to your school on 2 October 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 July 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders, governors including the Chair of the shadow Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan and the termly raising attainment plan were evaluated. Jointly with an assistant headteacher, the work in Year 5 writing books was considered and short visits were made to two Year 6 writing lessons.

## **Main findings**

The headteacher and senior leaders have made a resolute and rapid start on the programme for improvement they have set out. Planning is thorough, detailed and systematic so that staff, including those new to the school, are in no doubt about how and when things are to be done. Helpfully, priorities in the planning reflect the broader needs of the school, for instance, for a coherent and coordinated approach to professional development.

The headteacher and senior leaders have established clear lines of accountability and the management structure to support these. Forensic analysis of data, combined with careful evaluation of the impact of teaching on learning, ensures that leaders have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Plans for developments, such as the introduction of a new electronic assessment tool, are based on this thorough analysis. An audit of the skills of teaching assistants has been completed this term and is being followed up with training in basic skills.

The school's capacity to drive improvements has increased as new appointments have been made so that a full complement of middle leaders is now in place. Middle leaders are clear about their roles and benefit from shared management time as they get to grips with their responsibilities. They form an important part of the school's tight systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality and impact of provision. They have already had some training and coaching on the leadership skills they need and more is planned, including participation in a nationally recognised middle-leadership course.

Steps to improve writing are underway, in part through focused work with more-able pupils. Weekly 'golden envelopes' containing several new words for each class to learn are intended to help expand pupils' vocabulary. A new handwriting scheme has been introduced and the benefits of increased attention to good presentation are already becoming evident in pupils' books. Opportunities to celebrate writing are being created, for example through the half-termly 'golden pen' awards. Marking is becoming more focused on the precise steps pupils need to take to improve their work. Time is being given for pupils to respond to teachers' marking and some are doing this at length.

The shadow governing body has a work plan covering both the regular review of policies and the priorities in the school's improvement plan. Governors are linked to particular areas in the work plan to ensure that, overall, the shadow governing body has a clear view of the school's progress. Governors are committed to training to increase further their expertise.

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**

In response to the school's increasing capacity to drive improvement, the local authority is reducing its regular monitoring activities and challenge meetings. Most support now provided by the local authority is commissioned by the school. The majority of external support comes through the local partnership of schools, 'BD3 for all'. This is wide ranging, varying from regular meetings to working groups on specific developments and including the delivery of nationally recognised courses. The school is working in partnership with Bradford College on basic skills training for teaching assistants.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Austin  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**