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17 November 2014

Mrs Fay Walton  
Headteacher  
Whaley Bridge Primary School  
Buxton Road  
Whaley Bridge  
High Peak  
SK23 7HX

Dear Mrs Walton

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Whaley Bridge Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 14 November 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.

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:

- improve the school development plan, by adding success criteria linked to the expected outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- ensure that governors receive further support to help them to ask more challenging questions about pupils' achievement.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, with other senior leaders, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I observed pupils while they were learning and checked examples of work in their books.

## **Main findings**

You, and your staff and the governing body, have worked with urgency and determination to begin to address the areas identified for improvement at the time of the last inspection.

You have worked hard to ensure that the school improves its channels of communication with parents and carers. For example, you organised a consultation evening for parents and carers soon after the last inspection, to gather their views about how the school could improve further. Following requests from parents, 'meet the teacher' evenings were arranged at the start of the academic year, to help them gain a better understanding of the routines and systems of each class.

You have worked effectively with your leadership team to devise an appropriate development plan to improve the school. The plan provides a clear strategic direction for the school, and includes milestones to enable the governing body to ensure that actions remain on-track. The plan also highlights the impact that improvements should make on accelerating pupils' achievement. The plan includes targets for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, but does not include targets for children in the early years Foundation Stage. You agreed to amend the plan to include this information, and to submit it to me before the end of November 2014.

The school's behaviour and writing policies have been revised and improved. As a result, your staff now have higher expectations of pupils' behaviour, and of their standards in writing. There is also greater consistency in the approach taken by your staff when faced with behaviour that falls below the expected standard.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding has taken place since the last inspection, as required. This has helped your leaders to improve the ways in which they track the performance and achievements of pupils supported through the pupil premium. Representatives of the governing body understand that they now need to use this information, and other information about pupils' achievement, to ask more challenging questions of you, and the school's other leaders, to ensure that they fully hold you to account.

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 provided good support to the school since the last inspection. For example, a senior adviser challenged your leadership team to improve its initial draft of the school's action plan. This was appropriate and resulted in a more focused and concise plan. The local authority has also brokered effective support from leaders of other schools. This helped to ensure that the external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding was conducted swiftly after the last inspection.

The local authority has agreed to provide further support to school governors, to help them to ask you, and other leaders, more challenging questions about pupils' achievement.

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

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Spencer  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy