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5 November 2014

Miss J Harris  
Headteacher  
Chickerell Primary Academy  
Rashley Road  
Chickerell  
Weymouth  
DT3 4AT

Dear Miss Harris,

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Chickerell Primary Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 5 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 September 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:

- introduce a timeline alongside the school action plan which clearly identifies when actions are to be completed and where support will be provided.

### **Evidence**

During the visit I met with you, your senior and middle leaders and representatives from the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the most recent inspection. Together we carried out brief visits to lessons, and spoke with pupils.

The current school improvement plan was evaluated and a telephone conversation was held with your school improvement partner.

## **Main findings**

You acknowledge the inspection was a catalyst that brought about an increased drive and passion from staff to improve outcomes for all pupils. Since the inspection you have worked determinedly to bring about consistently good teaching throughout the school. This focus is already beginning to show improved rates of progress for pupils in Key Stage 2 as teachers take more care in planning their lessons. Your recent checks on teaching confirm there is a greater consistency in the way teachers give pupils regular opportunities to take responsibility for their learning. Our joint visits to lessons showed teachers are giving pupils work that more closely matches their learning needs. All staff have raised their expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving as a result of the training teachers have received following the inspection. You have begun to adapt the school development plan to include the recommendations made in the inspection report. A timeline which clearly identifies when actions are to be completed and where support for staff will be provided has yet to be completed. Consequently staff, governors and parents are unclear about how much progress the school is making.

You have begun to train and support staff to improve the quality of marking across the school. However, this is at a very early stage of implementation. School leaders have reviewed the curriculum to ensure appropriate attention is given by teachers to developing pupils' core skills in as many subjects as possible. You have introduced a new planning format for teachers to ensure they make clear in their planning pupils' learning targets. Leaders confirm this strategy is helping teachers to provide more effectively for the wide range of pupils' learning needs. Careful checking on the achievements of the school's most vulnerable pupils shows these pupils are continuing to make good progress.

The governors who met with me say the effective communication channels within the school enable them to remain well informed about the work and progress of the school. They particularly appreciate your detailed and regular headteacher reports. They say these help governors to ask insightful questions of leaders as well as support the school. Governors take their responsibility to monitor yours and your staff's well-being seriously. They ensure appropriate systems are in place to manage and check on teachers' workload. The inspection has renewed governors' determination to check how well they are challenging school leaders and checking the school's work. For example, they have looked at ways to make the minutes of their meetings clearer to provide evidence that they hold leaders robustly to account. Governors have also completed an audit to identify skills and training needs which will also be used to guide them when the time comes to appoint new members. A full review of the governing body has been arranged for later in the term.

## **External support**

The school is wisely drawing on the expertise of external partners, including a self evaluation partner and expert practitioners from other schools. For example, the school is currently receiving support to improve the quality of phonics teaching. As an academy the school also buys into a range of support services provided by the local authority. Currently, governors are receiving support and training from the local authority in order to become more confident in their roles and in holding the school to account.

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

Yours sincerely

David Edwards

**Her Majesty's Inspector**