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10 December 2014

Angela Mander  
Newfield Park Primary School  
Whittingham Road  
Halesowen  
B63 3TP

Dear Mrs Mander

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Newfield Park Primary School**

Following my visit with Helen Reeves Associate Inspector to your school on 9 December 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.

**Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, 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. The school improvement and post inspection plans were evaluated. Inspectors also viewed minutes of governing body meetings and the outcomes of your monitoring activities.

## **Main findings**

You have identified the immediate priorities and the essential support required to ensure your success. All of the initiatives are clearly explained and the successful outcomes are both measured and transparent. With senior leaders and governors you have responded to the inspection findings with urgency and commitment. You lost no time in developing a school action plan to address all aspects of the areas for improvement. Since September, the actions have been revised and updated a number of times to take account of the changing needs of the school and the considerable successful impact of the work undertaken. Strategies include a suitable range of training, in-house checks and records of progress.

You quickly revised the school's approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Monitoring records were adapted so they are now subject specific and include criteria which are suitably broad. This approach enables leaders and managers to collect extensive evidence on which to form their evaluations. Feedback to staff is detailed and provides clear direction for ongoing improvement. Monitoring includes a number of strategies: lesson observations; scrutiny of pupils' work; discussions with pupils; and careful tracking and analysis of pupils' progress. Many of the observations are unannounced so that leaders and managers see the on-going quality of teaching and its impact on pupils learning over time. Teachers are required to consider their own personal action plans and identify any support required. Teachers have responded positively to this approach and like leaders, are committed to ambitious and speedy improvement. There is no hint of complacency but rather a strong sense of determined team work to bring about the successes everyone is keen to achieve.

Children achieve a good level of development by the time they leave the Reception class. Unvalidated data for 2014 show the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was an improvement upon the previous year and 13 percentage points above the national average. Standards achieved at the end of Year 2 were above average in all subjects and were at least in line with the national average by the end of Key Stage 2. A higher proportion of pupils than nationally made expected rates of progress by the end of Year 6 although not all of the most able pupils achieved the higher levels.

Pupils' progress is kept under close scrutiny and meetings are held at least every half term to track, analyse and consider pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. These meetings focus strongly on identifying rates of progress between individuals, groups and year groups. Suitable intervention or extension is provided where necessary. Support is carefully tailored to the needs of individual pupils so that some may be taught in small groups for a fixed amount of time or others may receive intensive one-to-one support as needed. Leaders are careful to identify any different rates of progress between groups. The necessary support is provided so that the most able pupils, as well as the lower attaining groups, receive the help they need. You have also been careful to establish provision to include

access to the wider curriculum such as music and extra-curricular clubs where possible.

All staff quickly took on advice for marking pupils' work to stretch and inform future learning. In addition, training arranged by you helped teachers consider the use of their questioning in lessons and how this technique could deepen pupils' understanding. Teachers, teaching assistants, leaders and managers have taken full advantage of all available training from different sources. Together, you have considered the needs of the new National Curriculum and developed ways to teach the necessary skills and concepts and then provide varied opportunities for pupils to apply them in different subjects and circumstances. For example, one group of pupils spoke excitedly about making different measurements in a forest using a variety of tools and units of measure. Training has also helped teachers and managers to consider short-term developments within the bigger picture of the school's development. As a consequence, managers are clear about adopting different strategies for a variety of purposes.

Governors have a range of suitable skills, knowledge and expertise. Nevertheless, they conducted an audit to identify any gaps, consider training needs and prepare for the future reconstitution of governors. They have increased their involvement in the school's day-to-day work to include observations and interviews with pupils. The school improvement committee meets more frequently to keep track of the school's journey of improvement. Governors fully understand the need for measurable impact and they are not shy in their challenge of leaders. They fully understand the need to acquire and consider data regarding pupils' standards and progress. Minutes of governors' meetings clearly demonstrate their ability to hold leaders to account and seek explanation for various strategies and decisions.

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 officers know the school well and considered that the school needed only a light touch of support. Performance data and occasional contact with the school had not raised concerns. Officers were kept up to date regarding your access and involvement in ongoing mutual support through the Halesowen Teaching Network. You have made good use of the local learning community to share good practice, develop strategies for implementing the new curriculum and consider different approaches to assessment without levels. As a consequence of the inspection outcome, the local authority will conduct its own review in January next year.

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

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway  
**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