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14 January 2015

Mrs T Thomas  
Headteacher  
Horsmonden Primary School  
Back Lane  
Horsmonden  
Tonbridge  
Kent  
TN12 8JA

Dear Mrs Thomas

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Horsmonden Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on Tuesday 13 January 2015, 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 March 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 most recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that all teachers give detailed feedback to pupils about how they can improve their work so that pupils' progress accelerates.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher, subject leaders for English and mathematics and the Chair of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I observed sections of four lessons, all of which were conducted jointly with you or the deputy headteacher. I scrutinised

records of the governing body's work, evaluated the improvement plan and the school's own systems for evaluating its effectiveness.

## **Context**

You took up post in September 2014. A new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed in January 2015. The governing body have reconstituted. A new teacher has started working in the Reception class because the previous teacher is now covering maternity leave in another class.

## **Main findings**

The school has continued to improve under your effective leadership. You have wasted no time in setting the right priorities. Senior leaders have an accurate view of how well the school is doing because of the robust checks on teachers' performance that are now in place. As a result, teachers are very clear about what needs to improve further. Leaders hold teachers strongly to account and provide teachers with the support they need.

Governance has improved significantly. The new Chair of the Governing Body rightly ensures that governors regularly evaluate improvements. Governors visit the school more frequently to gather first-hand evidence of progress. Consequently, governors now challenge leaders more effectively.

Leaders for English and mathematics are becoming increasingly effective because they are making more of a difference to the quality of teaching. They now give clear feedback to teachers about how they can improve. As a result, for example, pupils now rightly get more opportunities to write at length. Other subject leaders are less effective. They are not making enough of a contribution to the good work of the assistant headteacher in developing the school's curriculum.

Some teaching has improved greatly and is now good. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson pupils applied their calculation skills when solving two-step word problems. All pupils were challenged and engaged because the work was at the right level for them. Provision in the Reception classroom has also improved. The accurate assessments in the recently introduced 'learning journeys' are enabling adults to plan relevant tasks to improve children's learning, for example more frequent speaking and listening activities. However, teachers' comments about pupils' work are not always helping pupils to know what they need to do next. In some classes, therefore, pupils do not make as much progress as they could.

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 make good use of external support, for example the English subject leader's good use of the clear and precise guidance provided by the local authority. You have also made effective use of links with other schools, for example, the successful bid to the National College of Leadership and Teaching to receive support with your plans to improve mathematics teaching from Claremont Primary, a local teaching school.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Barnes

**Her Majesty's Inspector**