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12 January 2015

Mrs M Robertson  
Headteacher  
Riverbridge Primary School  
Knowle Green  
Staines  
TW18 1AJ

Dear Mrs Robertson

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

Following my visit to your school on 12 January, 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 October 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 not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- amend the school improvement plan so that it shows clearly what actions you will take to help pupils achieve more
- add regular milestones to the plan, so leaders and governors can be sure the actions are bringing about rapid improvements toward long term goals
- hold middle leaders to account for the full scope of their role, so that they take responsibility for the progress of all pupils in the year-groups for which they are responsible

- ensure consistency of classroom practice by implementing an effective system for checking teaching regularly and taking action if required.

The local authority should take action to:

- ensure the support provided is co-ordinated and sharply focused on strategic improvement.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, other leaders and members of the governing body, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also spoke to a representative from the local authority and evaluated the school improvement plan. I visited classrooms, looked at pupils' work and reviewed minutes of meetings.

## **Context**

At half term in October the deputy headteacher left to take up a new post. The role has now been taken over by the assistant headteacher. The inclusion co-ordinator has also increased her days from one day each week to full time.

## **Main findings**

You are able to explain what needs to be done to improve the achievement of pupils but you are not working strategically to make the necessary improvements. This lack of strategy is reflected in the school improvement plan, which does not show clearly what actions you will take to improve pupils' achievement. You also need to add regular progress milestones so you and governors can be sure the actions are working. Governors are clear about what needs to be done to improve the school and have put in place a new system of performance appraisal to be able to hold you to account.

Middle leaders also recognise where improvements are required. They speak passionately about their areas of responsibility but do not have sufficient experience and knowledge to be aware that they are not yet carrying out the full scope of their roles. For example, although they are responsible for carrying out the appraisals of the teachers in the year-groups for which they are responsible, they do not hold them to account for their impact on pupils' progress.

You and the deputy headteacher are checking teaching regularly and are able to explain clearly what good practice looks like, but you are still not using the pupils' work as an indicator of how well they are being taught. This means that you are

focusing too much on what teachers are doing and not enough on how well pupils are learning.

Overall teaching remains too variable. Some teaching is effective and the pupils in those lessons are making good progress. An example of this is the high quality persuasive writing we saw in the Year 5 classes. However, the systems for ensuring consistency and making sure all staff follow the agreed approaches to teaching are not strong enough. For example, you have agreed that equipment should be available in mathematics lessons to support the pupils' understanding, but we did not see any being used, even though it would have been helpful for the children I spoke to.

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 learning partner, on behalf of the local authority, has organised advisors for English, mathematics and early years to provide support and development to middle leaders. He has also arranged for a local headteacher to work with senior leaders. However, the support is not having as much impact as it could because it is not co-ordinated. Advisors are not helping school leaders to focus sharply on the areas for improvement or implement systems which will help them to lead a large school.

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

Yours sincerely

Louise Adams

**Her Majesty's Inspector**