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Mrs Lynn Scott  
Headteacher  
St Aidan's CE Memorial Primary School  
Loyalty Road  
Hartlepool  
County Durham  
TS25 5BA

Dear Mrs Scott

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Aidan's CE Memorial Primary School, Hartlepool**

Following my visit to your school on 16 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 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. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

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:

- amend the school improvement plan to include the specific actions needed to improve outcomes for pupils and the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions undertaken
- review the policy for the presentation of pupils' work to ensure consistency in its application in all classes and by all staff
- ensure there is thorough monitoring of teachers' lesson planning so that all activities undertaken by pupils result in good progress becoming the norm.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders, the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

HMI visited lessons, spoke to pupils and reviewed a range of documentation including pupil progress data, performance management records and recent checks on teaching. The Single Central Record was checked to show compliance with safeguarding arrangements because of the large turnover of staff.

## **Context**

A new headteacher took up post at the beginning of January. Following the resignation of a substantive teacher, a long-term supply teacher is teaching a Reception class. Four additional teaching assistants and an admin assistant have been employed.

## **Main findings**

You have made an immediate impact since taking up post because of the governing body's well planned induction arrangements that took place since your appointment at the beginning of October. Pupil progress meetings are now more focussed and the interventions that are identified for individual pupils have a greater urgency. The teaching staff have a much better understanding of the progress pupils make and the standards pupils reach through data training delivered by your senior teachers. Smaller class sizes, for example in Year 6, are resulting in more one-to-one teaching which is beginning to result in some faster progress.

The well-judged review of the marking and feedback policy has resulted in pupils' English and mathematics workbooks now being scrutinised much more thoroughly. In addition, weaknesses in teachers' marking have been identified and tackled so that pupils now receive better information about how well they have done. The pupils now act upon their teachers' marking as a matter of course at the beginning of every lesson and immediate improvement can be seen in their work.

There has been no noticeable improvement in the presentation of pupils' work since the inspection. This is because teachers' expectations are not always high enough, pupils are not taught handwriting skills often enough and, when handwriting is taught, is not marked as well as other aspects of the curriculum in English.

The teaching assistant workforce is having a much greater impact on the progress that pupils make in lessons. Their job descriptions have been updated and appraisal systems are more rigorous. They are deployed where their individual skills can have the greatest impact on pupil progress. Furthermore, communication between teaching assistants and class teachers, especially regarding pupil progress, is much improved.

The school's action planning lacks detail about the specific actions identified to improve the outcomes for pupils especially in relation to the key issue of improving the standard of writing throughout the school. It also requires more detail about who will monitor and evaluate the actions undertaken, when they will do it and how

they will measure the impact. These matters require urgent attention and HMI will check on progress at a future visit.

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 supported the school well through a period of turbulence to secure the appointment of a substantive and experienced headteacher. The local authority is determined that the school becomes a good or better school as soon as possible and, to this end, has recently secured additional funding of £10000 from the National College of School Leadership to improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers through school-to-school support. Local authority consultant teachers are active in the improvement work of the school through regular monitoring and support visits and have recently challenged the school to improve the outcomes for their most able pupils in mathematics to good effect.

The recently appointed school improvement partner, an external consultant, has visited the school already and rightly identified pupils' weak presentation in workbooks and the need to exert much greater challenge for the most able pupils.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Hartlepool and the Director of Education for the Church of England Diocese of Durham.

Yours sincerely

Belita Scott  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**