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26 January 2015

Mrs C Freestone  
The Headteacher  
Dame Hannah Rogers School  
Woodland Road  
Ivybridge  
Devon  
PL21 9HQ

Dear Mrs Freestone,

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Dame Hannah Rogers School**

Following my visit to your school on 26 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 October 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 visit I met with you, members of the governing body, teaching and support staff to discuss the actions taken since the most recent inspection. Together we carried out brief visits to lessons and spoke with some pupils. Documents including school improvement action plans were evaluated.

### **Context**

Dame Hannah Rogers School is a small school which provides education for pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties. All pupils use non-verbal forms of communication and have complex medical and sensory impairments. Since the

inspection one new parent governor and a new clerk to the governing body have been appointed.

## **Main findings**

You have worked systematically since the inspection to update the school's safeguarding policies to ensure they are consistently implemented and fully understood by all members of staff. You have also begun to implement improvements to the way you write your reports for the governing body. They are now much more evaluative, succinct and less descriptive. In turn, the governors who spoke with me during my visit, say they find the quality of information they now receive from you much clearer to understand. As a result and following some recent training governors are beginning to exercise greater confidence to hold you and the school more effectively to account.

Procedures for regularly checking the school's policies are now fully in place which is helping to improve the effectiveness of leadership and management. Following the inspection you have ensured all teaching and support staff continue to receive training to bring them up-to-date with how to keep pupils safe, the use of the internet when working with pupils and the post-Ofsted action plans.

Improved communication with the Children's Home next door to the school allows you to check on any issues that may arise concerning pupils' well-being. You have worked successfully since the inspection to redraft the school improvement plan. This is now being closely monitored by the governing body and provides them with some of the information they require to check on your leadership. Furthermore, your self-evaluation process is focused more sharply on pupils' achievements and areas for improvement reflect the recommendations from the inspection. Reports to governors now have a better balance of information on pupils' achievement and the impact of the school's work. However, your governors acknowledge there is still further work to be done to identify clear success criteria for each action planned and to identify points during the year to check on the progress for and impact of the school's work.

During our brief visits to classrooms we saw teaching and support staff working closely together in providing stimulating learning activities that successfully engage pupils in learning. For example, today was a 'blue day' and pupils were engaged in a range of sensory activities linked to this theme. Pupils' enjoyment during this lesson was clearly evident in their willingness to take part in activities. Teachers and support staff work closely together in providing for the individual learning needs of pupils. They notice and carefully monitor pupils' responses and progress, no matter how small the steps may be. You are planning to extend the range of resources available to all pupils with a particular focus on ensuring these are appropriately age-related.

You have begun the process of commissioning a review of governance. This is a priority for the governing body and must be completed as soon as possible. The governors who met with me during my monitoring visit say the inspection process has already led to them all developing a greater awareness of their roles and given them confidence to hold the school more rigorously to account. Governors have begun to address areas for improvement laid out in the inspection report and are much more confident to ask challenging questions of the headteacher. For example, governors are already looking at ways to make the reports from the headteacher even more evaluative.

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 school is wisely drawing on a wide range of external partners, including a self-evaluation partner and expertise from a local safeguarding group to check on pupils' education health and care. The headteacher and governors are keenly aware that as a small, specialist school they need to develop and maintain a wide range of external partnerships to support their provision.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Devon and as below.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards HMI  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**