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Mr Darrell Wood  
Headteacher  
Five Acres Primary School  
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Dear Mr Wood

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Five Acres Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 02 February 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 November 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. The school should take further action to:

- ensure governor vacancies are filled as soon as possible
- work with the local authority to strengthen governors' understanding of their role, and develop their capacity to challenge the school and hold leaders to account
- ensure senior leaders use the information they gather to understand how well pupils are learning
- make greater use of relevant training and external support.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you, the Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority governor, other leaders with significant responsibilities and a representative from Oxfordshire local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school development plan. In addition, I scrutinised other school documentation including records of leaders' monitoring activity. The single central record was checked. I joined you on a tour of the school and visited every class, taking the opportunity to look at pupils' work.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection there have been no significant changes to staffing. A Year 1 teacher is currently absent. A temporary teacher has responsibility for this class. There is a high level of pupil mobility as many pupils are from service families. Due to falling numbers, the two Year 4 classes have combined to form one class in January 2015. Numbers will increase again in August 2015 when a new regiment is due to arrive. Many governors are relatively new in role, including the Chair of the Governing Body, who is due to leave in May. Two governors have recently joined.

## **Main findings**

Although you were disappointed with the findings of the previous inspection, you acknowledge there is room to improve to become a good school. You have taken the opportunity to move forward and address in some detail, the key inspection findings.

At the previous inspection, the role of other senior leaders was underdeveloped. You have reviewed senior leaders' job descriptions and as a result, they are much clearer about what is expected. Senior leaders are more involved in making checks on the quality of teaching in a variety of ways. They frequently look at pupils' work, check teachers' planning and visit lessons. Senior leaders welcome this greater involvement and are highly motivated to play their part with increasing effectiveness. They have a better understanding of their role in implementing improvements well. However, they are working independently of one another. Discussing their findings together will help the school know whether teaching and learning is improving overall.

You have rightly focused on developing the quality of teaching. More careful attention to supporting newly qualified teachers (NQTs) is helpful. NQTs are receiving more useful guidance than in the past. The regular checks which senior leaders make offer helpful advice to all teachers, particularly in developing the quality of their marking and feedback. Pupils' books show that teachers' feedback is more helpful. Pupils have more opportunities to act on the comments and develop their understanding or mastery of certain skills. This is particularly noticeable in spelling because pupils have regular opportunities to correct misspellings and learn from their mistakes. However, the quality of feedback is still variable from class to

class. Just on occasion, leaders need to ensure they have been clear about what is expected. For example, leaders are checking the quality of marking and feedback routinely without having reviewed and agreed the marking and feedback policy with staff.

The school development plan rightly focuses on the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. You have placed an appropriate emphasis on monitoring more closely the quality of teaching. However, the plan is overly complicated and on occasion, too centred on peripheral matters. Leaders are focusing too heavily on completing a number of actions rapidly, rather than evaluating whether these are making a difference to raising standards and improving learning. As a consequence, teachers do not have enough time to fully develop new ways of working. Unnecessary detail in the plan makes it difficult for governors to evaluate thoroughly if teaching and learning are improving. Leaders acknowledge that simplifying the plan to provide a greater emphasis on the quality of improvement, rather than the quantity of new initiatives, would be helpful. Nevertheless, the improvements implemented so far are contributing to improving teaching overall.

The effectiveness of the governing body continues to be hampered by regular changes to key positions. Following the previous inspection, a new chair was elected. He is due to leave in May. In addition, there are several vacancies. Despite this, governors are working hard to recruit new members. An advertising campaign, through local newsletters and parish magazines, is sparking some interest. Making sure the governing body has full membership remains a priority in order to distribute responsibilities more widely. At the end of the autumn term, an external review of governance was completed by the local authority. Governors have recently revised their roles and responsibilities, adjusting their committee structure to align more closely with school improvement priorities. The pupils and attainment committee is offering greater challenge to school leaders. Governors would benefit from linking with an experienced governing body to develop their skills and expertise further.

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 improvement adviser is providing useful support through regular visits. Since the inspection the local authority has provided relevant training to senior leaders. Helpful guidance and advice is helping school leaders to develop their skills and expertise appropriately. Senior leaders have a growing awareness of how to use information about pupils' performance to evaluate whether the actions they are taking are improving learning. They have also had helpful guidance to develop their mentoring and coaching skills. As a result, the school's NQTs are now better supported.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Farr  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**