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11 February 2015

Jessica Balado-Lopez  
Headteacher  
St Mary's Community Primary School, Beetley  
Elmham Road  
Beetley  
Dereham  
NR20 4BW

Dear Mrs Balado-Lopez

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Mary's Community Primary School, Beetley**

Following my visit to your school on 10 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. 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:

- check regularly that teachers are making the improvements recommended in the last inspection to ensure that all of their pupils make consistently good progress.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, a representative of the local authority and two members of the governing body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school development and improvement plan was evaluated. A

learning walk carried out jointly with you enabled me to observe pupils at work in lessons.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection, one teacher has returned to the school following a short period of leave. The deputy headteacher is currently absent from school. A new finance officer has joined the school.

## **Main findings**

You have made a prompt start by putting in place plans to increase the school's effectiveness. These plans rightly prioritise tackling the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection and include further actions to improve pupils' behaviour and safety. You implemented your plans at the start of this term. More time is needed to firmly embed improvements across all key stages. Your staff, governors and the local authority fully support the actions you are taking to secure long term improvements to the school.

Regular lesson monitoring is under way to assess the impact of additional staff training, and to hold staff to account for promoting greater consistency in the quality of teaching. Teachers are already beginning to tackle the shortfalls in the knowledge and understanding of some pupils in Key Stage 2. However, this is undermined by the temporary arrangements in place to teach Year 6 pupils in the absence of the substantive class teacher. You intend to bolster provision for these pupils by deploying an experienced teacher for two days a week, and by committing more of your own time to teaching this class. This short-term arrangement and a range of additional support targeted towards specific pupils in Year 6 should ensure that they are suitably prepared for national tests later this year.

Systematic procedures are in place to monitor pupils' progress. You are regularly checking this data to spot those at risk of underachieving and to enable staff to provide additional support for them. The most recent predictions show that the large majority of Year 2 pupils will meet or exceed national expectations this year. In Key Stage 2, most Year 6 pupils are expected to attain Level 4 or above in reading but not in writing or mathematics. Your improvement plans and interventions programme are rightly targeted towards improving this, and towards raising the overall proportions of pupils attaining higher levels in both key stages.

Staff are working collectively to make improvements in science and computing. In the absence of the deputy headteacher you are leading improvements in English. A recently qualified teacher is leading improvements in mathematics. She has made a good start by sharing good practice and scrutinising pupils' work to highlight strengths and common errors. This, and further training in teaching mathematics should enable teachers to provide further challenge in lessons for the most-able

pupils. You are ensuring that teachers' mathematical understanding is fully secure before expecting them to teach mathematical skills in other subjects.

Each member of the Governing Body has assumed responsibility for monitoring aspects of the school improvement plan and to make regular visits to the school to observe teaching. A further external review will take place later this term to evaluate the full impact of their actions to aid the school's improvement. Governors and senior leaders acknowledge that more needs to be done to forge stronger links with the local community and foster support from parents and carers.

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**

Relations with the local authority have improved. You are working closely with the leader of the Norfolk Good To Great initiative to drive improvements. A local authority consultant is visiting the school every six weeks to monitor the rate of improvement being made. You continue to work with some of the schools in the local area to share good practice.

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

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**