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11 February 2015

Mrs Karen Rolf  
Headteacher  
Danesholme Junior School  
Motala Close  
Corby  
NN18 9DT

Dear Mrs Rolf

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Danesholme Junior School**

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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in July 2015. 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. This judgement is based on the most recent action since the last monitoring visit. The increased rate of progress must be urgently built upon and sustained.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other school leaders; the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor; and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I observed two lessons jointly with the headteacher. I spoke informally with pupils and looked at their work. I examined pupils' books and scrutinised school documentation. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I checked the single central record.

## **Context**

Two class teachers are currently absent from school with long-term illnesses. A new part-time teaching assistant has been appointed.

## **Main findings**

The actions you and the deputy headteacher have taken recently to improve the quality of education, have begun to accelerate the progress pupils make. Improvement plans are more precise and focused to improve the quality of teaching. Plans have tighter timeframes for measuring success. As a result, the governing body is able to hold you to account more fully for your work.

You and other school leaders check the progress of pupils more regularly. You look carefully at pupils' work and check its quality, including the quality of marking. As a result, pupils quickly receive focused support to help them learn. School data show that most groups of pupils are making faster progress in their learning. However, the legacy of underachievement, particularly for the oldest pupils, means that they are not attaining the standards expected for their age.

Since the last visit, you have improved the quality of teaching in writing. Teachers plan writing activities that match the learning needs of pupils better. Pupils have more opportunities to write at length across different subjects. Pupils also use well-defined personal writing targets to improve their work. As a result, most pupils are developing their writing skills more quickly.

The governing body has acted quickly to address issues raised at the last monitoring visit. It is using data better to challenge school leaders about improvements in the quality of teaching. Governors are better organised and use the school improvement plan carefully to direct their actions in checking the quality of education. As a result, governors visit the school more regularly and have a clear focus on checking the quality of school leaders' actions. They offer timely and appropriate challenge where it is necessary.

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 is providing effective challenge and support to the school. It has identified funding and brokered the support from a National Leader of Education from Duston Academy. This support is being used effectively to evaluate the quality and impact of teaching. The headteacher has been quick to take this appropriate advice and has used it to improve the quality of teaching effectively. The local authority continues to provide reports that focus on the key issues and challenge

school leaders to improve further. Maplefields Teaching Alliance is providing valuable support to leading teachers. As a result, they are better able to contribute to whole school leadership of learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Jan Connor

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate