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11 February 2015

Mr D Collins  
Interim Headteacher  
Pinewood Infant School  
Pinewood Park  
Farnborough  
GU14 9LE

Dear Mr Collins

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Pinewood Infant School**

Following my visit to your school on 11 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:

- add more regular, measurable success indicators to the school's improvement plan so that leaders can evaluate the impact of their actions in a timely manner
- accelerate plans to secure the long term leadership arrangements at the school so that the pace of improvement is properly maintained.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, some middle leaders and a representative from the local authority. I also had a telephone conversation with the Chair of the Governing Body. I visited classrooms with you, and looked at some of the pupils' work. I also reviewed a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, minutes of governors' meetings and a report provided by the local authority.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection the headteacher has retired and you have been appointed as interim headteacher until the end of the spring term. The local authority are planning to put in place further temporary leadership arrangements to give governors time to appoint a permanent post-holder for September. A new teacher has been appointed to work in the Year 2 classroom.

## **Main findings**

Your arrival has brought much needed rigour and vision to the leadership of the school. Your honest and direct approach has effectively set the tone for change, whilst building upon and maintaining a strong team ethos. The school's improvement plan is well focused on the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. Although there are useful success indicators for each key priority, leaders would benefit from termly targets against which to evaluate the impact of their actions.

Other senior leaders are now becoming more effective. For example, the deputy headteacher is now clearer about what can be expected of the pupils at the school. Senior leaders are more focused on checking the progress of different groups of pupils. Monitoring activities have been more carefully planned and now link better with the areas for improvement in the plan. Leaders have also made a good start in improving phonics teaching. This was evident in the monitoring files used by leaders, minutes of governing body meetings and reports provided by the local authority.

During our short visits to classrooms we saw strong evidence of the difference your leadership has made. You have already successfully raised teachers' expectations. Teachers are beginning to set pupils' work at the right level to help them make rapid progress. In pupils' exercise books and learning journals we saw evidence that teaching now includes more frequent opportunities for all pupils, including the most able, to write at length across a range of subjects. This has already improved the standard of writing across the school. You have also increased the frequency with which pupils read to adults. This has rightly raised the profile of reading and there are signs that pupils are already making better progress.

Middle leaders remain less effective. Although they are aware of what is required to fulfil their roles, they are not yet able to make accurate and insightful evaluations of how well pupils are learning in their subjects and why. Similarly, the leadership of the early years needs more attention. Clear improvements were seen in the use of learning journals, for example, but systems to ensure that these are of the highest quality are still not tight enough.

Governors continue to provide robust challenge for leaders at the school. Minutes of their meetings show they ask challenging questions. They have rightly focused on securing long-term leadership at the school.

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**

Leaders continue to make good use of effective support provided by the local authority. This has been particularly helpful during a period of instability since the retirement of the previous headteacher. Despite local authority officer commitment to ensuring there is appropriate leadership available to the school during this period, the temporary nature of current arrangements means the capacity for further improvement is not secure. Local authority officers need to accelerate plans to appoint a permanent replacement for the headteacher to ensure the initial good work achieved under the current arrangements is not wasted.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Barnes  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**