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11 February 2015

Mr George Knox  
Headteacher  
Lady Bankes Junior School  
Dawlish Drive  
Ruislip Manor  
Ruislip  
HA4 9SF

Dear Mr Knox,

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lady Bankes Junior 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 October 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- include measurable targets for improvement, at regular checkpoints, in the school action plan
- implement the reviews of governance and pupil premium funding as a matter of urgency
- engage with the local authority and make links with good or outstanding schools to drive improvement in key areas of the school action plan.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other leaders, members of the governing body and a group of pupils to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. A meeting was also held with two representatives of the local authority. A range of pupils' work books and the school's action plan were evaluated. A series of short visits to classrooms were made with the headteacher.

## **Context**

Three part-time teachers have left the school and one has returned from maternity leave. A pupil premium leader was internally appointed three weeks ago. Three midday supervisory staff have been appointed.

## **Main findings**

The school's action plan lacks clarity. It provides no information about how leaders will measure the success of the school's actions. It is not clear how actions in the plan will improve pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching, the safety of pupils or the quality of leadership. As a result, leaders and governors are unable to check that the school is on track to resolve the areas that require improvement, or which aspects of the plan are falling behind schedule.

Only senior leaders were involved in writing the action plan. They consulted with staff, but did not enable middle leaders to plan for their areas of responsibility. The action plan does not identify any external support or challenge from the local authority, or from good or outstanding schools. Leaders have not considered how system leaders such as local and national leaders of education or governance may support the school's work. The school is currently too isolated to ensure that it is implementing good practice or driving improvements quickly enough. This results in weak practice. For example, teachers do not currently have a secure knowledge of the new national curriculum, or the expectations for ensuring pupils develop a mastery of skills and knowledge.

The external reviews of governance and pupil premium funding have been carried out. A new leader is now responsible for pupil premium funding. She has a clear understanding of the issues identified. She is enthusiastic to develop this area of the school's work. However, senior leaders have been too slow to respond to feedback from the reviews. There is a distinct lack of urgency to secure improvements.

Governors know what they need to do to improve their effectiveness. Their roles are linked to the key areas identified in the school action plan. This is securing a better focus for their frequent visits to the school. Nevertheless, they are still not able to

hold leaders to account for the effectiveness of the school, as they are still not getting all the information they need from leaders.

Too much responsibility currently rests with a small number of staff. Nonetheless, middle leaders are beginning to have greater responsibility for making checks on the work of other teachers. These checks have a clear focus and link to key areas identified in the school's action plan. This work is recent and has yet to show an impact in the quality of teaching or in pupils' achievement. The evidence gathered so far has been collated and fed back to staff and senior leaders. However, it is not reported to governors or fed into the school's self-evaluation. This limits the potential impact of these checks on improving the school's work and pupils' achievements.

Leaders have clarified how they expect teachers to mark pupils' work. Although inconsistencies remain in the quality of feedback, pupil progress is beginning to improve.

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 has increased its support for the school by providing training for governors and their clerk. Governors say this has been helpful. The local authority has also helped make appropriate arrangements for the external reviews recommended at the last inspection. There is a discrepancy between the local authority and the school's views of the support that the school has received.

The school has commissioned a range of support from independent consultants. This has helped improve the accuracy of leaders' judgements about the quality of teaching over time. However, this support has not been effective in enabling leaders to produce a precise action plan.

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

Yours sincerely

David Storrie  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**