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27 February 2015

Graham McArthur  
Headteacher  
Milton Road Primary School  
Ascham Road  
Cambridge  
CB4 2BD

Dear Mr McArthur

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Milton Road Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 26 February 2014, 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 December 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:

- before the end of this term, check that your plans to gain greater consistency in teaching are working and that the procedures to monitor individual pupils' progress are providing staff with the accurate information they need to ensure that all pupils make good progress.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and your deputy headteacher, three members of the Governing Body and two representatives of the local authority, and a telephone discussion was held with an external consultant to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plans and your monitoring information were evaluated. A learning walk carried out jointly with you enabled me to observe pupils at work in lessons.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection, an inclusion leader has joined the senior leadership team. An open meeting to discuss the school's inspection report was attended by senior leaders, teachers, governors and a large number of interested parents. Interim arrangements are currently being made to strengthen senior leadership next term in the temporary absence of one member of staff.

## **Main findings**

You and your governors feel that the main barrier preventing the school from being judged good is the inconsistencies in the quality of day-to-day teaching and assessment, and the complacency over time of some staff, leaders and governors. You have put in place detailed plans to tackle this. This includes regular observations of lessons, scrutiny of work and half-termly meetings with teachers to review pupils' progress. Aspirational targets have been set for significantly increasing the proportion of good or better teaching.

A detailed programme of training for teachers is under way. This includes general training for all staff and some additional training tailored to the specific needs of each teacher. There are fewer opportunities for teaching assistants to engage in training. You are monitoring the impact of training on a weekly basis, using the Teaching Standards to gauge each teacher's effectiveness, and by checking the difference it makes to the quality of their pupils' work.

These procedures are new and have not been fully tested to ensure that they lead to sustained improvement. Your latest lesson monitoring shows early signs of improvement. Expectations are higher. Marking is becoming regular and more consistent. It also indicates that the majority of teaching seen still requires improvement and there is no outstanding teaching. You fully understand your role in evaluating promptly the impact of training and taking decisive action when teaching is not regularly good.

Procedures are in place to monitor pupils' progress but these are long-standing arrangements that were in use prior to the inspection. Routine scrutiny of this data by teachers and leaders of core subjects did not prevent some pupils from underachieving last year. You feel that these procedures are suitable but acknowledge the need to strengthen them so that all staff understand fully how data can be used to plan learning and check that each individual pupil is progressing well enough.

Your current monitoring data shows that the high standards achieved in Key Stage 1 have been maintained this year, with almost all pupils in Year 2 predicted to achieve the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. In Key Stage 2 the vast majority of Year 6 pupils are predicted to meet national expectations and a large proportion is expected to exceed them. However, progress remains slow in

mathematics and only a few pupils are on track to make better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Subject leaders in English and mathematics are complemented by leaders of key stages who also play a role in monitoring pupils' academic progress. You and your governors acknowledge that you need to expect much more of these leaders in raising achievement throughout Key Stage 2. This is particularly important as the leadership of literacy will change temporarily later this year.

The Governing Body remains fully committed to securing rapid improvements to the school. Guidance is in place to ensure that governors visiting the school know what they are looking for and are able to report back their findings. Minutes of recent meetings show that governors are holding you and your senior leaders accountable for making improvements.

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**

You are engaging fully with the local authority to gain its support in securing long-term improvements to the school. A consultant is making regular visits to the school to provide staff with good quality training, coaching and mentoring and to support the monitoring of middle leaders. The local authority has also brokered further support from an external consultant to provide you with additional support and challenge. You are drawing on support from Linton Village College Teaching Alliance to learn from their good practice and gain further support for your senior and middle leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**