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Mrs Carolyn Jones  
The Royal First School  
The Great Park  
Windsor  
Berkshire  
SL4 2HP

Dear Mrs Jones

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Royal First School**

Following my visit to your school on 26 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 December 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 recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- include measurable targets for pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, and for the most able pupils, in the action plan so that the progress and attainment expected across all year groups are clear
- ensure the plan states clearly how and when senior leaders and governors will check and measure the success of actions by looking for improvements in pupils' learning
- monitor more closely the quality of teaching and provide feedback to staff on how to improve their skills and expertise
- arrange a full review of governance

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you, the Chair of the Governing Body, an officer from Oxford diocese and a representative from Windsor and Maidenhead local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's action plan. In addition, I scrutinised other school documents, including records of leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning. The single central record was checked. I joined you on a tour of the school and visited every class, taking the opportunity to look at pupils' work.

## **Context**

There have been no significant changes since the section 5 inspection.

## **Main findings**

Although you have a clear understanding of which aspects need to be improved, you acknowledge there has been a slow start. You have recently developed a new action plan, with support from the local authority. You have planned a range of appropriate actions. However, the targets you have set for improving pupils' progress do not feature well enough in the plan as the key measure for success. As a result, it is unclear how you will evaluate the impact of the actions you are taking. The plan needs to be strengthened to include specific references to pupils' progress and attainment, including for the most able pupils, and more regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning as a matter of urgency. This will help senior leaders and governors set a clear pathway to ensure the school improves more rapidly.

You have made some improvements to the way in which teachers' provide feedback to pupils. Pupils are now encouraged to respond to teacher's comments which gives them more opportunities to practice their skills. For example, in mathematics it was clear to see that pupils have regular opportunities to learn from their mistakes or complete additional challenges. Equally, in some classes, teachers remind pupils to take greater care with the presentation of their work. However, variability persists from class to class. Leaders need to agree revisions to the marking and feedback policy so that their expectations are clearly understood by all. In addition, there needs to be a sharper focus on evaluating how these changes are improving pupils' progress. Some activities, including looking at pupils' work, are planned but have not taken place. Consequently, leaders are unclear if pupils' achievement is improving as a result.

The governing body is more focussed on the school's performance during its meetings. Governors ask helpful and challenging questions of school leaders. However, the action plan does not provide enough specific information about how they will hold the school to account for its performance. Governors know that the

action plan needs to be sharpened. Governors are rightly keen to gather information from a range of sources rather than solely relying on interrogating information they receive from the headteacher. Governors have planned appropriate training from the local authority to develop their skills and expertise more fully. A review of governance, as indicated at the section 5 inspection, should be arranged.

Ofsted will carry out further visits, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. I will return to the school in the autumn term to evaluate how effectively leaders are collecting and using the information they gather to make sure all pupils are learning well.

### **External support**

The local authority has provided helpful support, which includes ensuring the school's plans are suitably focused on the key areas that require improvement. Appropriate support from a local outstanding infant school, Burchetts Green CE School, has been brokered. This support is at an early stage and it is too soon to see the impact. New governors have found the local authority's induction training helpful. The diocesan officer is also providing useful support to school leaders. The local authority and diocese officers are rightly working closely together to coordinate their support for the school. Visits from both officers are providing suitable challenge and support to senior leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Farr

**Her Majesty's Inspector**