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29 April 2015

Mrs Sharon Finn  
Headteacher  
Lambs Lane Primary School  
Back Lane  
Spencer's Wood  
Reading  
Berkshire  
RG7 1JB

Dear Mrs Finn

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lambs Lane Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 29 April 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 February 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. The school should take further action to:

- ensure the checks on teaching and progress which leaders make are sharply focused on how well pupils are learning.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you, three members of the governing body, including the Chair, and a representative from the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's action plan. In addition, I scrutinised other school documentation, including records of leaders' monitoring activities. I

joined you on a tour of the school and visited every class, taking the opportunity to talk to pupils about their learning.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection the Chair of Governors has left. A National Leader of Governance now chairs the governing body. There are currently three governor vacancies. Plans to fill these are well developed. A teacher with responsibility for a class of Year 3 and 4 pupils is retiring at the end of term. Two other teachers are due to begin planned absences, one at the end of term and one at the beginning of the autumn term. The school is currently advertising these temporary posts.

## **Main findings**

You, your governors and senior leaders have reacted promptly and purposefully to the inspection findings. The improvement plan has clear objectives linked to the right priorities. All staff, governors and local authority officers have contributed helpfully to the development of the plan. You have appropriately balanced the advice you have received to set a clear pathway for improvement. A noticeboard in the staffroom is used effectively to highlight steps to success. This collaborative approach means that all staff are fully involved in improving the school and have the key priorities at the forefront of their work.

You have appropriately revised the school's approach to teaching reading. Guided reading activities are more regular and better matched to pupils' interests and capabilities. During a learning walk, Year 5 and 6 pupils were able to competently use reading skills such as skimming to locate information about polar bears. Pupils say they enjoy reading. In the past, the range of reading materials available has been limited and not always appealing enough. Following responses to a pupil questionnaire and a review of reading materials, the school has updated its stock. It now includes books for Key Stage 1 pupils, class sets of books and computerised reading devices for older pupils. Pupils participate in the Reading Bus project and now read a wider range of literature more frequently. The emphasis on developing pupils' love of reading is seen in the regular posting by the headteacher of 'my book of the moment' on the door to her office.

There is a greater emphasis on improving the quality of teaching. Leaders are clear about their expectations but these are not fully understood by all staff. Leaders' monitoring activities need to focus more specifically on the progress pupils make. Leaders make regular checks to ensure that changes to the way teachers plan for pupils are implemented effectively. Teachers' planning includes activities that offer appropriate challenge for the most able pupils, particularly in mathematics. Pupils in many classes are making greater use of personalised learning targets to hone their skills. Senior leaders regularly scrutinise pupils' books to check that feedback from teachers is helpful. Although there is some improvement, inconsistency prevails.

Newly qualified teachers are well supported with regular opportunities to observe more experienced colleagues.

Governors have recently revised their roles and responsibilities, adjusting their committee structure to align more closely with the school's improvement priorities. Governors provide very useful support to school leaders and are equally ambitious about improving the school. They make valuable comments, challenging senior leaders robustly and ensuring that improvement is clearly documented and validated. Areas requiring improvement are kept under scrutiny to make sure that leaders are held accountable for improving the school rapidly.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

Wokingham Borough Council provides very useful guidance. The school's improvement officer makes regular visits to the school offering well judged support and challenge to make sure no time is lost in moving the school forward. School leaders are receptive. They are involved in the local authority's 'getting to good' training to share good practice and learn from other colleagues. The council has brokered a National Leader of Education to help the school improve. A National Lead of Governance is chairing the school's governing body very effectively. As a result, there is now a greater degree of challenge and scrutiny, which appropriately holds leaders to account for how well children are learning. The local authority has commissioned a full review of pupil premium funding which will take place in June 2015. As a helpful interim measure, a teaching and learning officer has looked closely at how well disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 are achieving compared to their peers.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Farr

**Her Majesty's Inspector**