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27 February 2015

Mrs Gill Denham  
Executive Headteacher  
Marish Primary School  
Swabey Road  
Langley  
Slough  
SL3 8NZ

Dear Mrs Denham

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Marish Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 25 February 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in May 2014. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The proprietor's statement of action is fit for purpose.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Slough and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Farr  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2014**

- Improve the quality of teaching to be at least good in order to raise pupils' achievement by:
  - making sure that teachers use assessment information to plan tasks which are at the right level for pupils of different abilities in each class
  - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations and set tasks which are hard enough, particularly for the most-able pupils
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply the skills learnt in mathematics to problem-solving activities
  - ensuring teachers mark work regularly and provide effective advice to pupils so they can improve.
  
- Improve pupils' behaviour so that all pupils are keen to take part in lessons and other activities and display consistently positive attitudes at all times.
  
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers on the quality of teaching and on pupils' achievement by:
  - ensuring that all middle leaders have a thorough understanding of pupils' performance in the areas for which they are responsible
  - making sure that the systems for checking the quality of teaching are effective and lead to improvement.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 25 February 2015**

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with you and the three deputy headteachers. I met the Chair of the Governing Body, who is also the Chair of the Board of Trustees of Marish Academy Trust, and two other governors. I observed seven parts of lessons, all with senior leaders. Together with a senior leader, I undertook a learning walk around the newly designed Early Years department. I looked at a range of school documents. The academy proprietor's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring visit, four teachers have left the school, including a teacher with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs. One of the deputy headteachers and the resource-based teacher now hold this responsibility. Following a period of ill health, the Chair of the Governing Body left in January. An experienced governor has now taken up the role.

### **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

Pupil outcomes are improving. Attainment at the end of 2014 improved from the previous year, particularly in mathematics and writing. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were just below average in reading and mathematics and above national expectations in writing. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2014 exceeded national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. This shows considerable improvement from 2013. In addition, more pupils achieved the higher levels, both at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, than in previous years.

Leaders are working with a clear sense of purpose. Plans are appropriate and leaders evaluate meticulously the impact actions are having on improving outcomes for pupils. Leaders can demonstrate that progress in writing, mathematics and reading is beginning to accelerate, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Progress in Years 3 and 4 is slower.

Middle leaders are developing their roles well because they are clear what is expected of them. Useful training is helping middle leaders make better use of pupil achievement information to evaluate how well pupils are learning. Consequently, middle leaders are beginning to implement well-judged changes to the way their subjects are taught. For example, pupils have target cards for reading so are much clearer on their next steps of learning.

Curriculum plans have been reviewed. There is a greater emphasis on pupils' using their mathematical understanding to solve problems. In a Year 2 mathematics

lesson, pupils understood appropriate technical vocabulary such as vertices and edges to describe 3D shapes. Many were then able to use their understanding to select accurately which properties described a cube.

Leaders have established well-constructed plans to improve the achievement of boys. Teachers structure lessons more carefully and ensure that topics have appropriate appeal for all pupils. In a Year 6 writing lesson, pupils were thoroughly engaged in exploring the stylistic features of journalistic writing. Pupils were able to describe why the writer had made certain vocabulary choices and then link their observations to the impact these had on the reader. As a result, pupils are attentive and behaviour in lessons is improving.

Regular checks on the quality of teaching are more robust. Systems for managing the performance of staff are thorough. Senior leaders work together as a team and ensure teachers get helpful coaching, feedback, support and advice. Newly qualified teachers are developing their skills well by working alongside more experienced colleagues. As a result, the quality of teaching overall is steadily improving. However, teachers do not always check frequently enough that pupils have understood new methods or concepts so errors are not addressed quickly. Although leaders have made some improvements to the quality of teachers' marking and feedback to pupils, this remains variable.

Systems to safeguard pupils are robust. The single central record meets requirements and the member of staff responsible for this specific aspect of safeguarding is meticulous in their approach.

Governors offer appropriate support and challenge to school leaders. They have begun to gather information first-hand, including undertaking more regular learning walks, rather than relying on information solely from the headteacher. Governors need to make sure the focus of their work dovetails with the school's priorities so that they can know how well the school is improving.

### **Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- Achievement is improving. Progress is accelerating, particularly in Years 5 and 6. More pupils are now achieving the higher levels.
- A thorough programme of mentoring and support has been developed for newly qualified teachers to work alongside more experienced colleagues. This is starting to improve the quality for teaching.
- Expectations of good behaviour have been re-established and there is now greater consistency. Relationships between pupils and teachers are a strong feature of the school, with pupils showing appropriate levels of respect towards adults.
- Behaviour in lessons has improved. Pupils are quick to settle when asked. They also work well together, taking turns and listening carefully to one another.

- Pupils are responding well to the additional responsibilities they have been given, including the roles of 'junior leaders' at lunchtimes. Incidents of poor behaviour are reducing.

### **Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- Activities for the most-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenging. Sometimes, they have to do the same tasks as other pupils before they are encouraged to try something more challenging and better matched to their abilities.
- Teachers do not always notice quickly enough when pupils do not understand certain concepts or are unclear how to complete a task.
- Governor monitoring activity is not always aligned closely enough to school priorities.

### **External support**

Following the judgement at the first monitoring inspection, the proprietor has now taken appropriate steps to ensure that the statement of action is fit for purpose. Trust leaders and external consultants carry out regular visits to the school. Support to develop aspects of the school has been useful, including regular visits from an Early Years consultant and a behaviour consultant.