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Justin Wrench
Headteacher
Shalford Primary School
Church End
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Dear Mr Wrench

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Shalford Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 June 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in January 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, I met with you and we toured the school, visiting all of the classrooms. I also met with the assistant headteacher, the leader of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, two members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, and the headteacher of a school in Essex who is supporting the school. I evaluated the local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plans. I looked at achievement data and records of your lesson observations.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, the assistant headteacher has left the school and been replaced. A temporary teacher joined the school, on the day before my visit, to teach in the Year 5 and 6 class. You have been teaching this class because the

previous teacher left the school shortly before the section 5 inspection. The governors have recruited a permanent teacher who will join the school in September 2015.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The school has made good progress in addressing the areas of improvement identified at the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the Key Stage 1 phonics check has improved significantly because of better teaching. Children in the Reception class are making good progress in developing their reading and writing skills. Key Stage 1 pupils are benefiting from more focused and effective teaching of the sounds letters make. The attainment of Year 6 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics has also improved. The proportion of pupils now making the expected and more than expected progress, from their Year 2 outcomes, has increased and compares favourably with national averages. You have introduced an assessment and tracking system in line with the new national curriculum. Data shows that pupils in Year 5 are also making improved progress. There is more to do, however, to ensure that teaching meets the needs of the most-able pupils. Too few of them are on track to attain the higher level 5. Additionally, the presentation of pupils' work is too variable and teachers do not do enough to improve pupils' handwriting.

You and your leadership team are starting to build an accurate picture of the quality of teaching and learning in the school. Teachers receive helpful feedback following your lesson observations. Checks on the work in pupils' books and surveys of staff and pupils contribute well to your accurate evaluation of the school's progress. This evaluation feeds well into the school's long and short-term improvement plans. The local authority's statement of action dovetails well with the school's plans and includes ambitious targets for improvement. Plans focus appropriately on the areas of improvement from the previous inspection but do not address the low attendance at the school. The school is not doing enough to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence.

Your leadership team is growing in effectiveness. The leader of the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has developed a strategy to improve the impact of support for this group of pupils. She is planning to change the way that teaching assistants are deployed to ensure better value for money. She is also determined to ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are helped to become increasingly confident in their learning.

Governors are well informed and they ask challenging questions, for instance about the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. They check that pupil premium funding is making a difference in closing the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school. Members of the governing body and local authority

representatives monitor the school's progress rigorously, in meetings of the school improvement board. Governors check that teachers' pay reflects their effectiveness.

The local authority is now supporting the school well. It has matched the funding the school receives through the 'Aspire Programme', which is a model for school improvement. A national leader of education, who is the headteacher of a local school, visits Shalford Primary School as part of this programme to support you and your team. The local authority has brokered training for teachers through the teaching schools' alliance. You and your assistant headteacher are in the process of completing the outstanding teacher programme. The remaining teachers will begin the improving teaching programme in the autumn term. The local authority also provides helpful support to improve the environment and teaching in the Reception class. You make good use of the support offered and brokered by the local authority, but the school is becoming increasingly self-sufficient as the quality of teaching and leadership improves.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Winter
Her Majesty's Inspector

Once the school has had 24 hours to report any factual inaccuracies, the post-inspection letter is copied as appropriate to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority