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6 July 2015

Mrs Jane Fines  
Headteacher  
Stonebow Primary School Loughborough  
Stonebow Close  
Loughborough  
LE11 4ZH

Dear Mrs Fines

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Stonebow Primary School Loughborough**

Following my visit to your academy on 3 July 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2015. 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.

#### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. I held a meeting with the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The academy improvement plan was evaluated. I scrutinised pupils' books and examined other academy documentation. During the visit, you joined me on a tour of the academy where I spoke with pupils informally about their work. I checked the single central record.

#### **Context**

Since the last inspection, four class teachers have resigned, one of whom is the special educational needs leader. All four teaching posts have been filled for the

beginning of the autumn term. The early years leader is absent from the academy due to a long-term illness.

## **Main findings**

It is clear that you and the deputy headteacher are determined to raise standards and increase the progress of pupils at Stonebow Primary School. Although the action plan is focused correctly on the key areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, it does not contain quantifiable or measurable targets for improvement. As a result, the governing body is not able to hold you or other leaders to account for your actions with sufficient rigour. The actions you propose to take are not precise enough to ensure clarity of purpose for all members of staff. Consequently, it is difficult to measure your impact on pupils' progress with sufficient accuracy.

You have begun to improve the quality of teaching by ensuring teachers have a more accurate understanding of what pupils know and what they need to learn. All leaders share your determination to improve teaching. With you, they regularly check the quality of learning through looking carefully at pupils' work and challenging their colleagues to raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Through training and support, teachers' planning is better focused on the individual learning needs of pupils. As a result, pupils are beginning to make better progress in their learning and consequently pupils' behaviour has also improved.

Pupils' writing has improved. It was clear from my visit that pupils are enjoying their writing and they feel well supported to write through opportunities to talk about their work with each other and their teachers. As a result, pupils have increased the amount of writing they do and progress in writing has accelerated, including in the early years. Pupils are also gaining key skills in grammar and punctuation. However, not all teachers correct common spellings mistakes regularly enough to ensure they have the greatest impact on pupils' progress in this area.

Teachers' feedback to pupils is consistent and effective. All pupils spoken with during my visit had a clear understanding of how their teachers' comments helped them to learn. Pupils have time to respond to comments. Teachers regularly give feedback to pupils while they work. This is particularly effective because pupils are able to respond straight away and the dialogue between them and their teachers is powerful in supporting pupils in making learning gains quickly.

The governing body is committed to bringing about the necessary improvements so that all pupils achieve well. It has been quick to seek the views of parents and to communicate its plans for improvement. Individual governors have visited the school to check on progress of leaders' actions. However, this has not been carried out in a strategic way and the governing body has not developed ways of challenging leaders to improve outcomes that are linked closely with the academy's improvement plan.

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**

Stonebow Primary School works closely with the Loughborough Primary Academy Partnership (LPAP), which is a partnership of nine academy schools. The LPAP is effective in supporting academy leaders to check the quality of pupils' work. It also checks and evaluates pupils' data across the nine academies to identify areas for development. The academy is also an associate of Loughborough Learning Alliance (LLA). Through this alliance, the headteacher and senior leaders receive support from a National Leader of Education to check the quality of teaching and learning. LLA has also provided the support of a National Leader of Governance to carry out the external review of pupil premium spending.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Leicestershire, and the Department for Education Academies Advisers Unit.

Yours sincerely

Jan Connor

**Her Majesty's Inspector**