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Thursday 16 July 2015

Mrs Naomi Pauley  
Interim Headteacher  
Nunney First School  
Catch Road  
Nunney  
Frome  
Somerset  
BA11 4NE

Dear Mrs Pauley

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Nunney First School**

Following my visit to your school on Wednesday 15 July, 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 2015.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair, a teacher and one teaching assistant. A telephone call was held with a representative from the local authority and a Local Leader of Education who is supporting the school. I was given a tour of the school and reviewed key documentation including the single central record. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

### **Context**

The headteacher at the time of the inspection has now left the school. You were appointed as interim headteacher on 1 June 2015. Two new teachers are due to start the school in September 2015. Two experienced governors have joined the governing body. The school is consulting with the Regional Schools Commissioner

for the South West regarding proposals to become a sponsored academy. It is anticipated that a decision will be made by January 2016.

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

Since your arrival on June 1, you have started to implement the much needed changes required to improve the quality of the school's work. Governors, teachers and teaching assistants agree that the school 'is very different now to the one at the time of the inspection'. Morale is improving quickly because staff feel supported and able to contribute to school improvement.

You are giving careful consideration to tackling the most urgent improvements required first. You are raising teachers' expectations of how much pupils are capable of during lessons and improving pupils' attitudes towards learning. Training is helping teachers plan activities that are becoming increasingly matched to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school is improving. Pupils are contributing more to class discussions and responding more thoughtfully to teachers' marking. Evidence from pupils' books shows that a greater quantity of work is being completed. Pupils are also sustaining work of a higher quality throughout tasks, illustrating their improving efforts when tackling activities.

The governing body responded decisively to the inspection findings by tackling the underperformance of key members of staff. The appointment of two new members has immediately strengthened the skill set of the governing body. The number and variety of monitoring activities are increasing and have provided governors with a helpful baseline from which to judge improvements. Governors are improving their skills quickly when conducting monitoring activities and are starting to become more effective in their roles because they are fully involved in a range of joint monitoring activities with you. Governors are aware that currently, monitoring activities focus on compliance issues, such as whether the new marking policy is being implemented, rather than the impact of teachers' marking on pupils' learning. Arrangements have been made for an external review of governance early in the autumn term.

The local authority has provided prompt and effective support to strengthen the overall leadership at the school. The brokering and appointment of you from Vallis First School has brought about immediate improvements to pupils' behaviour and the learning environment for pupils. The governing body has been improved with the appointment of two experienced members. Good quality guidance and support provided by a Local Leader of Education from Lympsham First School is leading to improvements to the curriculum for children in Reception and the quality of the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). Activities to check examples of pupils' work at the end of Key Stage 1 and Reception, conducted by local authority advisors, have provided clear guidance to teachers, leaders and governors. All working at the school are therefore clearer about which areas require significant improvement.

The local authority has provided personnel support to address urgent issues regarding leadership and teaching at the school. However, the statement of action and subsequent local authority and school improvement plans remain in draft form. The statement of action provides detailed contextual information and clear roles and responsibilities for those involved in supporting the school. However, additional work is required to fully spell out the budgetary details alongside staff development and training needs. The lack of clear information in the local authority plan is therefore hampering your ability to construct an effective school improvement plan. Both plans at this stage lack some features that support effective monitoring of the areas for development identified at the last full inspection. Some success criteria, for example to improve the quality of leadership and management at the school, are not precise enough. Key milestones specified in both plans lack specific, measureable targets from which to judge the success of actions.

A finalised statement of action and completed improvement plan, agreed by all parties, should be actioned as a matter of urgency and forwarded to the inspector as soon as possible in the autumn term. Each will be reviewed at my next monitoring visit.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Light  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**