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11 December 2015

Mrs Nicola Forrest  
Headteacher  
New Road Primary School  
Bryant Street  
Chatham  
Kent  
ME4 5QN

Dear Mrs Forrest

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to New Road Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 1 December 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 June 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 in order to become a good school. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that long-term school improvement planning is an effective tool for school leaders and governors to monitor the progress towards becoming a good school.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The meetings focused on the actions taken since the last inspection. Together, we made a brief visit to all classrooms, talking to some pupils informally. We also witnessed rehearsals for the school's Christmas production. School improvement planning was evaluated along with a

range of other documents including evidence of leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching, minutes of meetings of the governing body and the school's own records of pupils' attainment and progress.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection the previous headteacher has retired. You took up your post as headteacher in September 2015. One other member of the teaching staff left the school at the end of the summer term. Three other teachers will leave the school at the end of this term. You have managed to recruit qualified and experienced staff to replace those teachers who are leaving.

## **Main findings**

Since taking up your position in September you have not wasted time in starting to address the areas requiring improvement identified in the last inspection report. You have also identified some other key areas for improvement. Together, these form the basis of your latest school improvement plan.

Changes in staffing, including those that are planned but have not yet taken place, have not hindered your drive to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school. You have rightly focused on raising the expectations of staff in order that all pupils are challenged to achieve their best. The impact of this is yet to be seen in the long term, although during my brief time in the school I was able to see where higher expectations are already having a positive effect.

Provision in the early years has also been a focus. Improvements in the learning environment are already having a positive impact on outcomes for children. The extra funding you made available has enabled the outdoor classroom to be enhanced and extra resources to be purchased in order to better support learning. Staff, including support staff, have attended training to help improve the quality of teaching. More emphasis on the use of assessment information to inform the planning of next steps in learning for children is also having a positive impact on the progress they make.

During my visit, you were keen to show me all areas of the school, enabling me to meet pupils in classrooms and as they moved around the school. Although classrooms were mainly calm and pupils were engaged with their learning, there were instances where low-level off-task behaviours were seen. This was particularly the case where work set for pupils was not as challenging as it might be. You are confident that this will improve as higher expectations of the progress pupils make become embedded across the school.

You have acted quickly to improve all aspects of leadership and management, and have a clear vision for the way leadership of teaching, learning and assessment will

be distributed in the future. This vision will be shared with the governing body at their next meeting.

Arrangements for managing the performance of teachers have been updated. You were able to demonstrate clearly how the new appraisal process, linked to the professional development of teachers, will have a positive impact on the progress pupils make.

Your partnership with a national leader of education (NLE) has already had a good impact. Through this partnership, staff have benefited from bespoke training and visits to other settings to improve their subject knowledge and enhance their expectations of pupils' progress. Subject leaders have also gained from this partnership and more is planned for the new year.

Improvement planning is effective. Your original 30-day plan cleverly fed into the short-term plan for improvement developed to cover the first four months of your headship. This allowed you to focus on the key areas identified for improvement in the last inspection, but also allowed you time to identify those other areas that need improving. During the visit you were able to demonstrate that your priorities for improvement are the right ones. These will be the focus of the new long-term school improvement plan which is still in draft form. Governors eagerly await this plan.

Governors have supported you well since you joined the school. They offer appropriate challenge and are well aware of the need to improve this 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**

The local authority has provided the school with a range of support since the last inspection. The impact on leadership and management has been particularly positive. The support given to you as a newly appointed, yet experienced, headteacher has been pitched at a sensible level and a good working partnership has developed. The local authority's willingness to fund the partnership with an NLE and broker other professional development opportunities for staff has also been positive.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Close

**Her Majesty's Inspector**