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11 January 2016

Mrs Nevin Deakin  
Headteacher  
Marton and District CofE Aided Primary School  
School Lane  
Marton  
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Cheshire  
SK11 9HD

Dear Mrs Deakin

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Marton and District CofE Aided Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 11 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.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, subject leaders, a group of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Documents were scrutinised including: the school development plan, safeguarding policy and assessment information. I also visited a number of classrooms with you to speak to pupils, look at their books and observe their learning.

## **Context**

There have been a number of staffing changes since the previous inspection. These include the appointment of four new teachers.

## **Main findings**

Actions taken since the most recent inspection have not had sufficient impact and lack the sense of urgency and precision required to improve standards at the school rapidly.

Your efforts to ensure that all pupils are given work that is matched appropriately to their abilities have not been fully effective. Mathematics and English subject leaders, through their checks of pupils' books, identified that this issue persisted early in the autumn term. Actions to address this problem have not been robust enough to resolve the issues. This is partly because training provided by external consultants has not specifically focused on this area.

You have invested in a new system to record and track the progress that pupils make in school. Senior leaders use this information to identify the underperformance of some groups of pupils. However, the progress that pupils with special educational needs make has not been recorded or analysed. As a result, leaders do not know, with any degree of accuracy, how well this group of pupils is achieving.

Senior and middle leaders' checks on the quality of teaching across the school have not been successful in precisely identifying what needs to improve. This is because observations do not always focus clearly enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Furthermore, suggestions that are made to teachers for improvement are not rigorously followed up by leaders to ensure that they are having a positive impact.

Your plan for improvement has been redrafted following discussions with a national leader of education and now effectively reflects and communicates your ambitions for the school. Milestones serve as a useful tool for you and governors to check your progress towards the targets that you have set.

Middle leaders are keen to play a full role in helping the school on its journey of improvement. Through having more opportunities to check what is happening in their subjects they understand where the strengths and weaknesses lie. Separate plans to outline improvements in mathematics and English, however, do not contain the detail required to address fully the issues in these subjects.

Your actions and those of other leaders have begun to bear fruit in some areas. A new marking policy is beginning to support pupils to move forward in their learning. Pupils are increasingly responding to extra challenges set by their teachers and use feedback to correct spellings or other basic errors. The introduction of texts to

inspire boys' writing is showing the early signs of success. Pupils in Key Stage 2, for example, were enthused by the story of *The iron giant* by Ted Hughes.

Teachers have had the opportunity to observe outstanding practice in another local school, as well as strong teaching in their own school. Any impact is yet to be seen as visits have only recently taken place. Nonetheless, several teachers report that they will be implementing changes to the way they teach as a result of their observations.

Governors undoubtedly want the best for the pupils in the school. However, their actions to tackle weaknesses and hold leaders to account have not moved forward with the urgency required. Minutes of meetings show that questions asked of leaders are not challenging enough to fully get to the heart of the matter. Nonetheless, governors are now beginning to focus their efforts on improving their skills. The governor with responsibility for data, for example, has recently undertaken training on interpreting school assessment information. Plans are afoot for the rest of the governing body to also receive training in this area. Expertise has been added to the governing body with the addition of a new governor who has responsibility for safeguarding. Furthermore, governors have identified the need to undertake an external review of governance. This is set to take place early in 2016.

All pupils who I spoke to during my visit say that they feel safe. They are confident that bullying has no place in their school and have effective strategies to keep themselves safe when online. You have also introduced a new initiative, in partnership with Bangor University, to promote anti-bullying across the school. Pupils speak very positively about the impact that this is having on the way that pupils behave towards one another. All staff have had recent training to refresh their understanding of how to keep pupils safe and a new safeguarding policy has also been adopted.

Pupils' behaviour during my visit was excellent. They listen attentively in class and greet visitors politely and confidently. Their attitudes towards each other are highly positive. An ethos of respect and tolerance permeates throughout the school. As one pupil stated, 'We treat others exactly how we would like to be treated ourselves.'

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 effectively brokered a range of support for the school. A national leader of education has helped you to develop the school improvement plan. Furthermore, teachers have had the opportunity to observe learning and teaching in an outstanding local school. Much of this support is at a relatively early stage and it is therefore too early to judge its impact.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Bell

**Her Majesty's Inspector**