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10 March 2016

Mrs Sharon Slack  
Headteacher  
Monyash CofE Primary School  
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Monyash  
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Derbyshire  
DE45 1JH

Dear Mrs Slack

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Monyash CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 2 March 2016, 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 that 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 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, in order to become a good school.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and with a representative of the local authority. I had a discussion by telephone with the Chair of the Governing Body. We visited all classrooms briefly. I looked at safeguarding records, the latest data available on the pupils' achievement, and evaluated the latest version of the school improvement plan.

### **Context**

You have joined the school as the new headteacher since the previous monitoring visit.

## **Main findings**

The reason for carrying out this second monitoring visit and thus the focus of the activities during the visit was that, at the time of the first monitoring visit, the long-term arrangements for the leadership of the school were uncertain, which was potentially a barrier to the school's improvement. Also, a planned review of governance had not taken place.

After the first monitoring visit, the local authority tackled the uncertainty around the leadership of the school in the immediate term. You took responsibility as the new headteacher for the school not long after the first monitoring visit. Also, the local authority initiated a sensible and carefully considered process for making more-secure arrangements for the longer term. That process is still continuing, which means that, at the time of this second monitoring visit, the long-term arrangements for the leadership of the school have not been secured and that continues potentially to be a barrier to the school's improvement as it approaches a full reinspection. The uncertainty needs to be resolved as soon as possible.

Nevertheless, the transfer of responsibility from the former executive headteacher to your was managed effectively and went smoothly. As a result, you have been able to build upon the work initiated by the former executive headteacher. You have, correctly, continued to make the quality of teaching and assessment the main priorities for improving the school. Those priorities are reflected in the latest version of your school improvement plan, so that it is now a more effective tool for improving the school.

Accordingly, there have been further developments in the quality of teaching and assessment. You have used a combination of professional development and training, better and more-varied monitoring of the work of the school, performance management discussions and targeted externally provided support for teaching effectively. The combination has enabled you to establish approaches to teaching and assessment focused more consistently on the pupils' learning needs. Improvements in the pupils' achievement are evident in the early years.

Nevertheless, some challenges remain. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) check fell to below average in 2015. The proportions of pupils making expected progress in English, mathematics, and science in Key Stage 2 were below average. Those proportions are affected significantly, however, by the very small numbers of pupils in the year groups.

The review of governance has now been completed and the governing body is acting on the findings and recommendations. The governing body is now better organised and approaches its work more purposefully. It is more focused on the progress of

the pupils and more alert to the achievement of different groups of pupils, such as those eligible for the pupil premium and the most able.

The activities initiated at the time of the previous monitoring visit to enable the governing body to obtain a view of the work of the school at first hand have meant that it is now better informed. It is more capable, as a result, of asking pertinent questions of school leaders about the progress of the pupils, which it is doing. The full impact of this in terms of influencing the pace of developments at the school and on the progress of the pupils has yet to be seen. The governing body continues to be hampered by difficulties in recruiting members.

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, sensibly, sustained the higher-than-usual level of support for the school which was evident at the previous monitoring visit. The school's progress and the level of support are being kept properly under review. The support provided for improvements in the quality of teaching is being used effectively by the school and augmented by a useful partnership with another school, as part of the professional development to which I have referred already. The result is a coherent programme of staff development for Monyash. The local authority has planned bespoke training for the governing body, to assist with its further development.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Derbyshire, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Education for the Diocese of Derby.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss

**Her Majesty's Inspector**