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4 November 2015

Elissa Vigus  
Headteacher  
Kingstone and Thruxton Primary School  
Kingstone  
Herefordshire  
HR2 9HJ

Dear Mrs Vigus

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kingstone and Thruxton Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 October 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 April 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 the academy trust board are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that all improvement plans include targets that are sufficiently ambitious to ensure that pupils make at least good progress
- ensure that all improvement plans contain precise actions, with detailed timescales and measurable outcomes
- clearly state in all plans who is monitoring each action and ensure that the academy trust board is fully involved in evaluating the success of these actions
- check that the school website meets all of the latest Department for Education statutory requirements.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the executive headteacher and the deputy headteacher and three members of the governing body to discuss the

actions taken since the last inspection. The school's post-Ofsted action plan, school improvement plan and the action plan for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs were evaluated. I undertook a walk round the school with you to carry out short observations of learning in all classes. Phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) teaching in some classes was observed with the phonics leader. Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised, along with the 2015 attainment information, recent parent questionnaires, safeguarding records and minutes of the academy trust board. Informal discussions were held with parents.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection, there have been a number of staffing changes and the leadership team has been extended. The mathematics and English leaders, who were both members of the middle leadership team, have left the school. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed, with responsibility for leading English and assessment. The Year 6 teacher is now leading mathematics. A temporary Year 4 teacher has been appointed, pending a permanent appointment. You are now the coordinator for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Two members of the academy trust board have been given the responsibility to monitor the school's safeguarding actions. The school is part of the Kingstone Academy Trust, which is led by an executive headteacher, who is also the secondary school headteacher. You are headteacher of the primary school and work closely with the executive headteacher and the academy trust board (the governing body of the academy).

## **Main findings**

Leaders have taken decisive steps to improve the overall effectiveness of the school to be good or better at the next full inspection. You have taken on the leadership of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in the school and receive effective support from staff in both the primary and secondary areas of the academy. You have worked closely with the executive headteacher and the academy trust board to appoint new staff and improve the monitoring of pupils' progress. The leadership team has been strengthened by the appointment of the new deputy headteacher. She has added experience to the school and has appropriate plans to improve pupils' outcomes in writing especially. The headteacher and the new deputy headteacher are already working well as a team. Teachers have taken on board the changes leaders have introduced, such as having a greater focus on boys' writing and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date and staff are kept informed of any changes. As a result of effective systems which leaders and the learning mentor have in place, pupils are safe in this school. Members of the academy trust board regularly check the safeguarding procedures in place in the school. The headteacher is the designated teacher for looked after children and has recently received training for this role.

Questionnaires and informal discussions show that parents are very complimentary of the school and support the improvements being made. The academy trust board now has a greater focus on the primary school and has shown commitment through the creation of the new deputy headteacher post.

The school action plans are detailed and contain the areas for improvement recommended as a result of the last full inspection. However, not all action plans make it easy for the academy trust board to carefully track how each action is monitored and some milestones do not have a specific date recorded by which they should be achieved. Not all action plan targets clearly state the attainment that leaders would like pupils to achieve. Nevertheless, there are early signs that the school's actions are helping to improve pupils' progress, especially in mathematics and reading, but this is not yet consistent across the school. A range of training for teachers and teaching assistants took place at the start of this term to further support pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders plan to attend an Ofsted 'Getting to Good' seminar in the near future.

Pupils' workbooks show that teachers are applying the school's marking and feedback policy. All work is marked and there is evidence that teachers' feedback leads to improvements in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Books show that vulnerable pupils, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, are making similar progress to that of other pupils in the school. Pupils enjoy using the feedback by staff to 'purple polish' their work, which supports better progress. Assessment information from earlier this year for pupils in Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 shows a slightly mixed picture overall, but stronger outcomes in mathematics and reading. Leaders have action plans in place to further focus on improving writing progress and outcomes for all pupils, to ensure that these are at least in line with national averages.

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 school has received effective support from the secondary part of the Kingstone Academy Trust and an external consultant. A note of visit since the inspection from the external consultant is very positive and recognises that leaders are taking the necessary actions to address the areas for improvement recommended from the previous inspection.

As an academy, the school does not have direct support from the local authority, but has recently chosen to buy back into some of the school improvement services offered.

As the work with the local authority support is about to begin, it is too early to judge the impact of this support for Kingstone and Thruxton Primary School.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the academy trust board and the executive headteacher. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Bellworthy  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**