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17 March 2016

Mrs Sally Wood  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Wood

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Curdridge Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 11 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 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 taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- increase the level of challenge provided by governors to school leaders and managers so that the rate at which the school improves continues to accelerate
- develop the leadership of special educational needs to ensure that the quality of teaching and support for pupils as well as the impact of intervention strategies are formally monitored to identify the value they are adding to pupils' learning
- improve the quality of the outside learning area for children in the early years.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, three governors including the chair and a representative from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. Discussions were held with the new leader for early years and the special educational needs coordinator. I met with a group of pupils from Year 5 and Year 6 to look at and discuss their work as well as to seek their views about the school. You joined me on a learning walk of three classes covering the early years, and Years 1 to 4. The school improvement plan was evaluated and a range of school documentation was scrutinised, including the school's website. These included evaluations completed by middle managers and reports of visits undertaken by the local authority. The school's single central record was also reviewed.

## **Context**

Since the inspection in June 2015, only one class teacher still works at the school. In September 2015, nine new members of staff joined the school. The senior management team has been restructured; this has led to the appointment of a new deputy headteacher, who is due to start working at the school after the Easter break. A newly appointed local authority governor will begin working with the governing body this term. The role of the special educational needs coordinator has been revised so that it is better aligned with the special educational needs code of practice.

## **Main findings**

Following the inspection in June 2015, the attention of governors was at first diverted to the important task of recruiting new staff. They have now started to become more involved with the work of the school and each of them is linked to a subject leader. Governors benefited from the external review undertaken by the local authority. Consequently, they have a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They have received helpful support and training in order to interpret published information about pupils. However, they have yet to use what they have learned to fully challenge leaders at all levels about the impact they are having in raising the achievement of pupils.

You have raised expectations about the quality of teaching and the achievement of all pupils. Consequently, the overall quality of teaching has improved significantly. As a result, the progress pupils make has improved significantly since September 2015. This includes for pupils that are more able, particularly in writing and mathematics.

Typically, teachers now take responsibility for the learning and progress of all their pupils, including those with special educational needs. Most teaching makes effective use of strategies that pupils find helpful. Pupils told me that they

particularly appreciate the use of 'learning walls' because, in their view, the information displayed helps them to become more independent with their learning and not over-reliant on their teachers' help. Younger pupils enjoy using visual aids and word banks to help them with their writing and their mathematics. Teachers mark pupils' work in a way that helps them to progress with their learning. However, teaching and support staff do not all check the learning and progress of all pupils during lessons. Consequently, some pupils, particularly those of either higher or lower ability, do not always focus enough on their work, and therefore do not make the progress they should within some lessons.

In 2015, the school met the floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6. The school's current information about pupils and the work in their books show that the majority of pupils are progressing well towards age-related expectations. Evidence from work in pupils' books and seen during lessons shows that in Year 2 and at Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress with their writing and mathematics, especially the more able. Pupils are developing greater depth of understanding, for example in their number and calculation work, and increased stamina in their ability to write at length. The few pupils that are not progressing as well as others are those in Year 1 who are part of the Reception class. This is because they do not all receive the same good quality of teaching and support.

The new early years' leader has helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning for the youngest children in the school. However, there is still a way to go for this to become good. She has introduced more rigorous and detailed teaching plans. Staff plan activities that cater for the needs and interests of children. The topic of superheroes was used well to help support children's learning and development across all the areas of learning in a way that captivated their imagination. However, the outside learning area does not provide a wide enough range of stimulating resources to fully support children's learning and development.

You have developed a detailed and thorough improvement plan aimed at helping the school to become good. This document provides effective guidance for all staff and governors about what they need to do to help the school to improve. It communicates a clear vision for the school. The plan is appropriately linked to all of the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. It includes milestones that enable governors and senior leaders to measure progress accurately.

Most leaders and managers are developing their roles well. They scrutinise pupils' work to identify how well pupils are progressing and areas of weaknesses in pupils' learning. Middle leaders have used this information and the school improvement plan to produce their own well-focused action plans. You have driven many of the changes and improvements made to the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs. However, the special educational needs coordinator does not have a clear overview of the overall quality of teaching and support for pupils with

special educational needs. There has also been no evaluation of the impact of intervention strategies in order to ascertain whether or not these add sufficient value to pupils' learning and if they are worth pursuing.

The behaviour of pupils in and around the school is generally good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and those who spoke to me told me that they are happy at school and confident that staff would be quick to help if any problems arose. They enjoy using computers to support them with their work and know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

Safeguarding is effective. The school has completed all the required checks on the suitability of new members of staff to work with children. However, not all staff who work in the early years are sufficiently alert to potential hazards when children use the outside area.

### **External support**

The school makes effective use of the good support on offer from the local authority. This has contributed to governors developing their roles and beginning to evaluate the quality of the school's work more effectively. A range of local authority officers have worked closely with different members of staff and this has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, including in some aspects of the early years.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier

**Her Majesty's Inspector**