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6 February 2017

Sarah Gallagher  
Headteacher  
Snape Community Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Gallagher

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Snape Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 27 January 2017, 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 May 2016. 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.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that newly appointed staff settle quickly and the revised procedures for teaching and assessment become firmly established this year.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, your staff and two members of the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. The

school improvement plan was evaluated. An opportunity to walk the school with you enabled me to see pupils at work in lessons. You also shared with me a range of documents to show how school leaders are monitoring improvements to the progress and attainment of pupils.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection, two members of staff have left the school. Two new teachers have recently taken up their posts. Consultations about the school becoming an academy are ongoing. At this stage, no firm decision has been made.

## **Main findings**

You and your governors have taken decisive action to tackle ineffective teaching in key stage 2. New staff in key stage 2 have added fresh ideas to improve the teaching of mathematics and English. Discussions with your staff confirmed to me that there is a growing collective willingness and determination to improve provision and outcomes for pupils. You and your governors feel there are no major barriers preventing the school from being judged good at its next inspection.

The legacy of weak teaching in key stage 2 is clearly evident in the outcomes achieved by pupils last year. Overall outcomes in mathematics remained low in both key stages. You have responded to this by reviewing your improvement plans and prioritising rapid improvement in mathematics. You have provided staff training within school and enabled teachers to attend courses, organised by a range of providers, to develop their subject knowledge. New resources have been purchased to provide pupils with a range of practical, hands-on resources to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. Teachers have had opportunities to visit other local schools to observe and learn from their good practice.

Overall, results in key stage 1 in 2016 remained strong. However, by the end of key stage 2, less than half of the pupils in Year 6 met expectations in reading and writing. Renewed emphasis has been placed on promoting pupils' reading at school and at home, developing different styles of writing and using their creative writing skills in other subjects such as religious education and humanities.

Expectations of staff are higher. Regular monitoring by you, the governors and the local authority is holding teachers increasingly to account for the progress made by pupils in their classes. This includes observing lessons, scrutinising pupils' work and discussing with staff the progress made by each pupil. Training for governors has increased their understanding of what constitutes effective teaching and learning.

Our visits to classrooms confirmed your own views that learning is now more purposeful and enjoyable. Pupils worked hard in developing their creative writing, and worked well together to review others' work and suggest improvements. Relations between staff and pupils remain strong and this generates a positive

environment in which to learn. A brief scrutiny of pupils' books showed that progress in mathematics is improving, and the most able are given suitably challenging work to do.

New assessment procedures have been introduced to monitor pupils' progress over time. This includes periodic assessments of their writing and tests to gauge their mathematical knowledge and understanding. These procedures are new and do not provide the full picture of how well all pupils are doing. For example, much of the information about pupils' achievement is expressed in percentages which, due to the very small number of pupils, does not reflect fully the progress each pupil is making from their starting points.

You feel that the ineffective teaching in key stage 2, noted at the time of the last inspection, contributed directly to your most able pupils underachieving last year. These pupils were not sufficiently inspired or motivated to do their very best. To improve this, you have clearly identified those who are particularly able and are routinely monitoring the level of challenge provided for them. You are also liaising with their parents to ensure that these pupils achieve what they are capable of attaining.

You remain as interim headteacher and continue to provide effective leadership for the school. This arrangement has been extended up to July 2017. Beyond this date, the leadership of the school is unclear. It is dependent on the school securing its long-term viability by increasing in size and joining an academy trust. No decisions have been reached at this stage.

The governing body has developed significantly since the last inspection. Minutes of their meetings show that they are fully involved in determining the strategic direction of the school, particularly in linking with likely partners to become an academy. They feel empowered by the training provided by the local authority to enable them to monitor the school's work, and hold staff accountable. Their regular visits to classrooms provide a much clearer overview of the impact of teaching and help to collate the views of pupils and staff.

### **External support**

You and your governors appreciate the good support provided by the local authority to help manage difficult staffing issues appropriately. You also feel that the regular support and challenge provided for you and your staff by the local authority help to validate the impact of your actions to improve the school. A consultant visits the school each week to provide effective support for the teaching of mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**