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Mr Kevin Oakley  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Oakley

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Godolphin Infant School**

Following my visit to your school on 23 November 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.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 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 for the school to become a good school.

**Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders. I also met with members of the school governance committee and the trust board. I evaluated the school's action plan and scrutinised other documents, including information about pupils' achievement. We visited lessons in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2.

**Context**

Since the previous inspection, you have made significant changes to your senior leadership team. The two deputy headteachers who were previously in post left the school and the two assistant headteachers were promoted into these roles. The

assistant headteacher posts were discontinued and the posts of phase leaders for key stage 1 and the early years were introduced. The newly appointed phase leaders took up their posts in September 2017. The school is now fully staffed. Most teaching staff are permanent employees. Four teachers are on long-term supply. A new chair of governors was appointed in May 2017. The previous chair remains on the governing body in his role as chair of the trust board.

## **Main findings**

You have worked successfully to build on the successes reported at the last inspection and to ensure swift further improvement. Work over the last year to improve teaching has proved effective. The proportions of pupils reaching age-related expectations and those working at a high standard in the end of key stage 1 assessments in 2017 were above those seen nationally. There were notable improvements in outcomes in writing. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in phonics increased markedly and was above average.

Outcomes in the early years also improved. A successful recruitment drive, which included bringing in teachers from overseas, has resulted in a much more stable workforce than was previously the case. You rightly are placing high importance on developing your staff team. Leaders are keeping a close eye on teachers' development and providing a range of helpful training and coaching. This is helping staff meet your expectations and teach effectively. You have introduced a new approach to teaching writing to further strengthen pupils' verbal and written communication skills. An improved method for teaching handwriting is also in place. During our visits to lessons, we saw that teachers are adapting well to these new approaches. The use of 'cold tasks' is providing teachers with a clearer understanding of pupils' starting points and learning needs. The teaching we observed was consistently purposeful. Pupils were making great strides in their handwriting and writing with confidence. Leaders recognise that, in some cases, the most able could still be stretched further. Further consideration is also needed of how new approaches to teaching and assessing writing will ensure that pupils' spelling mistakes are being picked up and corrected as a matter of routine.

Leaders' work to improve attendance has proved very effective. Attendance has improved markedly overall and for disadvantaged pupils. The proportion of pupils with poor attendance has also reduced notably. A raft of strategies introduced over the last year have all contributed to this. This includes increasingly effective support for families and greater challenge, including fining families for unacceptable attendance and taking their children on holiday in term time. There is an increased focus on celebrating and rewarding good attendance.

You are changing the way you record and analyse teachers' assessments of pupils' achievement. You spoke of your hope that the new information system you are using to capture assessment information will enable you to see everything you need to know about pupils' achievement at 'three clicks of a mouse'. However, leaders

and governors are yet to determine how the new information system will be used to create an incisive overview of the extent to which pupils and groups of pupils are achieving well in relation to their starting points. Additionally, work to establish how leaders will evaluate pupils' achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics is at an early stage.

The school's development plan defines a suitable range of actions for improving the school's effectiveness. However, the plan could be sharper. It does not consistently clarify the starting point for each piece of work or the precise difference leaders' actions will make to the quality of teaching and the achievement of groups of pupils by key points in time. Consequently, leaders and governors are not as well placed as they could be to evaluate the precise impact of their work.

You have worked effectively with governors to ensure that the school meets the Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

### **External support**

You have made effective use of a range of helpful support. External reviews have helped leaders and governors verify self-evaluation and confirm priorities for improvement. You have successfully secured funding from the local authority to bring in external support for the introduction of the school's new approach to teaching writing. Further support is planned to help you embed the approach. Leaders and teachers have also benefited from attending meetings with other schools to ensure that assessment is accurate.

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

Yours sincerely

Diana Choulerton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**