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Mr Andrew Hodgson  
West Green Primary School  
West Green Drive  
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West Sussex  
RH11 7EL

Dear Mr Hodgson

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to West Green Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 18 January 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring 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 monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- strengthen the analysis of pupils' current progress to check that standards continue to rise as quickly as possible
- urgently find the best sustainable solution to the overall oversight, leadership and management of the early years foundation stage.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also spoke with the chair of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority on the telephone. Informal conversations were held with a small number of parents as they dropped their children off to school. I made a short visit to the provision for Nursery Year and had a discussion with the nursery manager. Accompanied by you and your deputy, I briefly visited each class in the school. I took this opportunity to speak with a range of pupils and look at the work in their books. To support our discussions, I sampled

some of the school's documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, reports of visits by the local authority, records of current pupils' outcomes and leaders' records of their own monitoring and evaluation activities. I also evaluated the school development plan.

## **Context**

Two teachers have left since the previous inspection. However, with the exception of changes in Reception Year and some maternity leave, staffing has been fairly stable. The Bumble Bees provision for nursery-aged children no longer requires separate registration by Ofsted. At present, it continues to run separately from the school with its own manager, overseen by the governing body. However, it is now included in the school's inspections, contributing to an overall evaluation of the early years foundation stage that includes both Nursery and Reception Years.

## **Main findings**

Following a period of considerable change affecting staff and leadership, the school has enjoyed a spell of comparative stability since the previous inspection. Leaders have used this opportunity well to drive improvements and secure greater consistency of effective practice. Strengthening leadership at different levels, including governance, is keeping the school heading in the right direction. Leaders and governors are reflective and receptive to ideas about how to improve further. They demonstrate the capacity to effect the necessary change. The school development plan identifies pertinent points for improvement. It includes suitable actions to tackle all of the aspects identified as in need of improvement at the time of the previous inspection. You also keep the plan under review in light of leaders' own evaluations of the school's next priorities.

With other leaders, you carry out a wide range of helpful checks to ensure that the quality of teaching is improving. Subject leaders are gradually becoming more involved in this process. You are wisely ensuring that they are properly trained through working closely with senior leaders. Through your close, ongoing evaluation, you are confident that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment for current pupils is considerably stronger and more consistent than at the time of the previous inspection. You have balanced well the need to challenge any underperformance, with providing teachers with the necessary support and training to develop their practice.

My visits to classrooms readily revealed a broad range of indicators of more effective practice than at the time of the previous inspection. Attractive, well-organised and tidy learning environments set the tone for the purposeful activity taking place. Pupils were behaving well and strongly focused on their various tasks. They were confident to talk about and explain their learning, revealing their secure understanding. Pupils were clearly being challenged by tasks and questions that made them think because there was not an obvious or easy answer. I observed

them listening carefully to clear explanations and helpful demonstrations from teachers. Pupils told me how these really help them learn, but they also like it at other times when teachers give them clues and make them work things out for themselves. Teaching assistants were purposeful, offering constructive support to develop pupils' understanding. A wide range of randomly selected books across classes and subjects showed pupils' clear and obvious progress.

Data about the performance of pupils reaching the end of each key stage in 2017 does not consistently reflect the more positive indicators evident in classrooms currently. Overall, Year 6 leavers had made comparable progress across key stage 2 to reach similar standards as other pupils nationally. However, Year 2 standards placed pupils in the bottom 10% nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. While leaders have identified a range of valid contextual factors affecting this particular cohort, they recognise that teachers' own assessments of pupils' capabilities show that standards in this and other year groups are still not high enough. Leaders have worked hard with staff and other schools since the previous inspection to make sure that these assessments are reliable and accurate. However, their checks and analysis of whether pupils across the school are making enough progress to catch up with, or exceed, age-related expectations are not as tight or helpful as they could be.

Leaders' tracking shows that current pupils continue to make strong progress in their phonics across Reception and key stage 1. This is despite a dip in the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2017, affected by a variety of one-off factors.

Working with other leaders and staff, you have completely overhauled the curriculum. Pupils' work shows a wide range of learning, with strong links between subjects helping pupils to use and apply their basic skills in different ways. Literacy has a high profile. I saw evidence of pupils developing their reasoning and fluency in mathematics. Leaders are mindful of the difference their changes to the curriculum can make for all pupils.

Parents and pupils that I spoke to were mostly positive about school. In addition to providing rich learning opportunities, the significant improvements to the school's external environment provide an attractive backdrop to the friendly atmosphere at the start of the school day. Leaders are working towards realising the full benefits of a new system for recording, tracking, analysing and tackling behaviour-related incidents effectively. Keenly aware of the strong link between attendance and achievement, leaders and governors are keeping a close eye to ensure that all pupils attend as regularly as possible. This work is vital to the school's continued improvement.

There have been marked improvements to the quality of provision since the previous inspection in the Reception Year. With helpful support from local authority advisers, staff have significantly improved the environment and made sure that activities for children are purposeful and challenging. However, hampered by a range of

challenging circumstances, since Bumble Bees has not needed to be registered separately, the governing body has not managed to secure a shared vision for the future of the early years foundation stage overall. You, as headteacher, and your senior leadership team have no direct involvement with the running of the nursery. While children were meaningfully and productively engaged in their learning and play in both Reception and Nursery Years during my visit, there is also a lack of sufficient coherence and consistency of approach between the different classes.

### **External support**

The local authority has provided effective support and challenge to aid the school's improvement journey. This has been particularly valuable in securing improvements in the Reception Year. A wide range of advice, guidance and coaching for you has in turn had a subsequent impact on the developing leadership at other levels in the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Dunn

**Her Majesty's Inspector**