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7 June 2013

Kevin Watts  
Headteacher  
Northlands Junior School  
Winifred Road  
Pitsea  
Basildon  
SS13 3JQ

Dear Mr Watts

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Northlands Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 6 June 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings of my visit. 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 on 31 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, pupils, the governing body, teachers, teaching assistants and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. I observed two lessons jointly with you, and scrutinised the school's monitoring of teaching.

### **Context**

There have been no changes in staff since the section 5 inspection.

### **Main findings**

The majority of teaching across the school is good, and is showing improvement since the section 5 inspection. This is because senior leaders give teachers clear advice and, as a result, teachers know what they must do to get better. Training is focussed precisely on the aspects of teaching which are not yet good, and teachers say this is also helping them to improve. As a result of better teaching, pupils'

achievement is improving across the school. For example in Year 6, pupils have made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from the start of the school year. There remain gaps in pupils' learning, due to poor teaching in the past, and attainment is still slightly below nationally expected levels. Progress is not as strong in Year 3 in reading. The school is working on ways to maintain pupils' achievement in reading over the summer holidays before they start in Year 3. Most pupils know what level they are working at, but are not always clear about precisely what they need to do to get to the next level. Pupils are given time to improve their work based on teachers' comments. This is developed most strongly in Year 6 and has had a good effect on pupils' progress.

Although the school's action plan is carefully focussed on the areas for improvement from the section 5 inspection, the criteria for judging the success of the actions taken are not clear enough. Senior leaders and governors are monitoring the action plan to make sure it is effective. Governors visit the school regularly and ask challenging questions about how teaching and pupils' learning are improving. Governors and senior leaders have much higher expectations for achieving school improvement since the section 5 inspection and consequently improvements are being made more quickly than before.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to make sure:

- staff and governors can judge how successful they are in achieving the areas for improvement from the section 5 inspection
- pupils make faster progress in reading in Year 3
- the good practice in Year 6 in how pupils improve their work based on teachers' guidance is shared across the school.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The school is drawing upon the external support provided by the local authority and external consultants. This has had a good impact on improving teaching and pupils' achievement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for insert local authority name and as below.

Yours sincerely

Julie Winyard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**