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19 June 2013

Mr M Park  
Princecroft Primary School  
Princecroft Lane  
Warminster  
BA12 8NT

Dear Mr Park

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

Following my visit to your school on 19 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 in February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement action plan was evaluated. The outcomes of the school's and the local authority's monitoring activities were analysed. Teachers' marking and feedback on pupils' work was evaluated through discussion with seven pupils from three different classes. I also looked at pupils' English and mathematics books.

### **Context**

Following the departure of the previous headteacher, you were appointed as the substantive headteacher in April 2013. Since the last inspection three members of staff have resigned, including the deputy headteacher. The Year 4/5 teacher, who is also the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), has been on sick leave for most of this term. The current Year 5/6 teacher has been promoted to the role of

deputy headteacher from September 2013, and interviews for the remaining posts are underway. The local authority has recently published plans indicating that the school may be relocated in the next few years. Since Easter the school has joined the Wiltshire Improving School Programme (WISP).

## **Main findings**

Since February 2013, the school has benefited from good training and advice from the local authority and more is planned. Over the last term there is evidence that this support has helped pupils' progress improve at a faster pace than previously. Currently, pupils are making good progress in writing and reading, but pupils' mathematics progress still requires improvement.

During discussions, you explained that you are not convinced about the robustness of past data and pupils' benchmarking. To resolve your concerns and to ensure more rigour the school has made good progress in moderating teachers' judgements about pupils' current curriculum levels. It is particularly pleasing to note that most of the current Year 6 pupils have made outstanding progress since September 2012. However, given that one pupil equates to 7% of the school population and that some pupils have needed to make up for lost ground since they were in Year 2, the school is vulnerable to missing the floor targets this year. Nevertheless, there are examples of outstanding teaching and learning in the school. We agreed that this should be shared more with staff, so that they can model excellent practice.

The new ways of evaluating pupils' achievements, trialled in the Year 5/6 class has been a great success. The new learning success criteria and involvement of pupils in self-evaluation has improved the quality and amount of homework produced by this class. Parents and carers responded with positive comments that were evaluative and had a clear focus on how their child had understood and produced their homework. We agreed that this marking and assessment system should now be implemented straight away in all classes, rather than waiting until September 2013.

All of the pupils I talked with explained how their learning had improved since the last inspection. They told me that the use of 'How, What and Why' questions, had helped them to understand their learning and made it more enjoyable. This enjoyment is also evidenced by the increased attendance and dramatic reduction in exclusion rates. We agreed that the new process and systems devised by the school should be shared fully with parents.

## **External support**

The school is drawing effectively upon the external support provided to the school, by the local authority. You have been working closely with the headteacher from an outstanding school as part of the WISP programme. This partnership is providing

you with good support and challenge. The newly appointed deputy headteacher is in the process of receiving training for her new role, including taking part in the discussion that you have with the local authority about pupils' achievements.

Senior leaders are working closely with the governing body and the local authority to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- instigate the successfully trialled marking and assessment procedures this term, and share them fully with parents and carers.

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

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Wiltshire.

Yours sincerely

Steffi Penny  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**