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18 November 2013

Caroline Boyle  
Headteacher  
Buckingham Primary School  
Buckingham Road  
Hampton  
TW12 3LT

Dear Ms Boyle

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

Following my visit to your school on 18 November 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 September 2013. 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. The school should take further action to:

- strengthen the school action plan by adding achievement targets for all groups of pupils at each key checkpoint.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you, other leaders, the Chair and four members of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I scrutinised a range of school documentation. This included: the school action plan, records of the monitoring of teaching, pupil

progress and attendance information, and evaluations of work completed in exercise books. We visited classes together to see teaching and look at pupils' work.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection one teacher has left the school. A newly qualified teacher has been appointed. Two vacancies have been filled on the governing body.

## **Main findings**

You and your senior leaders have responded quickly to the findings of the last inspection. Actions identified in the school action plan are focused on bringing the necessary improvements as rapidly as possible, including closing the gap between the achievement of pupils eligible for additional funding and others. Changes to the senior and middle leadership team, already underway prior to the last inspection, have enabled leaders to make more regular checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Leaders have higher expectations of staff performance. As one middle leader commented, 'there is no hiding place at this school'. As a result, pupils are beginning to make more rapid progress, including those who receive extra help.

Governors are resolutely focused on ensuring that recent improvements are sustained. They have high expectations of school leaders and have provided greater challenge since the last inspection. They recognise the need to further develop their own skills and recently carried out an audit, which they have used to identify training needs. They have established a 'data task group', which is meeting on a regular basis to scrutinise information about pupils' achievement and check that targeted groups are making better progress.

Crucially, there are now more precise and coherent tracking procedures in place. These provide effective information for class teachers about the starting points of pupils and the progress they are making. School leaders are making effective use of this information to hold teachers more securely to account and to evaluate the impact of interventions. However, targets for pupils' achievement at each checkpoint are not referenced clearly enough in the school's action plan, so that leaders and governors can judge how quickly the school is improving. The teacher in charge of the specialist provision for pupils with severe and complex needs has carefully assessed their individual starting points, so that progress can be more effectively measured. However, the expectations of the progress that these pupils should make are not currently in the school's action plan.

The school has adopted a thorough approach to checking that the quality of teaching is measured against stringent criteria. Leaders are aware that they can do more to reduce variability in the quality of teaching, particularly at Key Stage 1. However, they are tackling this robustly. They use regular book checks, learning

walks and scheduled lesson observations to gather a range of information about the impact of teaching on achievement. They provide regular feedback to teachers and clearly identify the areas for improvement. Importantly, they make further checks to see whether the necessary changes have taken place quickly. Evidence from books indicates that improved teaching is enabling pupils to make better progress. Middle leaders are taking an active role in developing teachers' skills, through joint planning, scrutinies of pupils' work and sharing good practice. They report on the impact of their work to senior leaders on a weekly basis.

Since the last inspection a senior leader has provided strategic leadership for attendance. Changes to monitoring systems and interventions to improve attendance are comprehensive. A team which includes an attendance officer and family liaison worker acts swiftly where there are attendance concerns. A new reward system, giving raffle tickets to pupils who achieve 100% attendance each week, is motivating them to come to school more regularly. The school has also increased its level of education welfare support commissioned from the local authority. Together, these actions have raised levels of attendance compared with the same period last year.

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 local authority has increased its level of support since the last inspection. A local authority school improvement consultant has supported you in developing the school improvement plan, so that actions are more sharply focused. Governors have received training in understanding information about pupils' achievement, so that they are able to provide greater challenge to leaders. A specialist advisor from the local authority has visited the school on a regular basis to support the leader of the specialist unit. This has proved effective in developing a more accurate assessment of pupils' individual starting points. In addition, the leader of the specialist unit has benefited from visits to observe practice at two local special schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Russell Bennett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**