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19 December 2013

Mrs Jane Green  
Headteacher  
Alvaston Junior School  
Elvaston Lane  
Alvaston  
DE24 0PU

Dear Mrs Green

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

Following my visit to your school on 18 December 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 October 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:

- ensure that there is greater clarity in the school action plan about how actions are to be monitored and evaluated and by whom
- improve subject leadership by formalising arrangements for sharing best practice with the other school in the federation.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, other federation leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. I also met with the subject leaders of mathematics and English to evaluate their effectiveness. A tour of the school was carried out with the deputy

headteacher, during which some pupils were spoken with about their learning and progress and pupils' work books were examined. The latest internal assessment and attendance data were also shared with me.

## **Context**

There have been no staffing changes since the inspection.

## **Main findings**

You and your deputy have implemented a sound and workable plan to take the school forward quickly. It includes challenging targets and timely milestones to check progress. The arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the actions are not clear. Much of the staff training and development undertaken so far have already led to some positive outcomes. Recent internal pupil performance data suggest that there is accelerated progress in most year groups and those eligible for free school meals are achieving almost in line with others. In addition, school monitoring records show that the quality of teaching is also improving; weaknesses identified in teaching are being addressed swiftly.

School leaders have developed their support systems to work with parents more effectively. School evaluation reports say that this work, together with revised behaviour management across the school has led to a dramatic decrease in persistent absenteeism and an improvement in overall attendance in the school. Senior leaders are developing the role and effectiveness of subject leaders of mathematics and English. These middle leaders monitor the quality of teaching and have helped to develop the skills of some staff using coaching methods. Opportunities are planned, in the new year, for them to jointly observe lessons with you and the deputy headteacher, to improve their teaching judgements. There are no regular or formal opportunities set up to visit the other school in the federation to learn from outstanding practitioners.

Governors are experienced and capable. The knowledge and understanding that they bring from their role in governing the 'good' school in the federation, is bringing about new rigour to how leaders are being held to account. For example, a new robust performance management system has been introduced, which links appraisal targets to pupils' progress outcomes set out in the school action plan. You and the deputy headteacher are a strong and skilful team; together with other federation leaders, you have demonstrated the capacity to bring about improvements in a short period of time.

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 worked closely with the school for a number of years, brokering external support and validating leaders' judgements about teaching. A new link with another school is currently being set up to support school work on improving teachers' questioning skills. The school also benefits from being federated with a good school, which is also led by you; this provides staff with valuable opportunities to share best practice. You are a member of a cross-phase local alliance of senior leaders, which gives further support to your leadership.

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

Yours sincerely

Zarina Connolly  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**