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Tom Hyndley  
Headteacher  
Churchfields Primary and Nursery School  
Churchfields Road  
Beckenham  
BR3 4QY

Dear Mr Hyndley

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Churchfields Primary and Nursery School**

Following my visit to your school on 10 February 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 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:

- sharpen the school improvement plan so that it includes tighter timescales, specific details about the monitoring responsibilities of leaders and governors and interim milestones for which leaders can be held to account
- ensure that governors receive training to enable them to hold school leaders to account for improvements in teaching and learning.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you and the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan. Minutes of governing body

meetings, reports from the local authority, achievement information and your records of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning were scrutinised. I joined you to visit some classrooms where we looked at pupils' English and mathematics books.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection, the local authority has changed the adviser who is to provide school improvement support. At the time of my visit, he had not visited the school. School leaders are working closely with Belleville Primary Teaching School to explore how their support could increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning at Churchfields. There are a small number of vacancies on the governing body, which have not been filled while the governors explore reorganisation arrangements. A learning support assistant has left the school and been replaced.

## **Main findings**

Since the recent inspection, you have had a clear focus on the areas that were identified for improvement. You have ensured that all teachers understand what is expected of them when they mark pupils' work and have provided clear guidance about the frequency with which this should occur. The templates that you are using are a helpful prompt for teachers, and pupils told me that this is helping them to 'make our work make more sense.' Older pupils enjoy wearing their 'editing glasses' and using their 'polishing pens' to increase the effectiveness of their written work. You have ensured that teachers set targets for pupils in both English and mathematics. However, the targets are sometimes too easy and are not used consistently in every classroom. You have rightly identified that there is more work to do.

You have altered your staff-training timetable to ensure that it gives priority to improving teaching and learning. Initially you have focused on training the teachers but your plans now include training for the other adults who work with pupils. Pupils' books show the impact of the new strategies that you have introduced. This is best in Years 1 and 6 where the teachers' high expectations of what pupils can do combined with strict adherence to the new ways-of-working are leading to very high quality work in English and mathematics. This is not consistent across the school.

You have been actively seeking support from other schools. You have sought out the very best practice and are making plans for your teachers to have the opportunity to observe outstanding teaching in these schools. There is however some outstanding practice in Churchfields. More could be made of sharing this exemplary practice throughout the school so that others can learn from it.

Your own monitoring records show that the quality of teaching still varies considerably throughout the school. While you have plans to address this, your

actions have not been fast enough. You must now ensure that all teaching is moving rapidly to good or better and take swift action where this is not the case.

Recent assessment information indicates that you anticipate significant improvements in standards at the end of this year. The progress made by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics during the autumn term varied between classes and is not consistently good. You have introduced a more rigorous system for assessing pupils' abilities and are meeting with teachers every half term to discuss how well each pupil is doing. You know that bringing greater consistency to pupils' progress and keeping a close eye on the progress made by groups of pupils is an urgent priority.

You have created a helpful action plan to structure your improvements at the school. However, it does not identify in enough detail when you expect the improvement actions to be completed or who has the responsibility for monitoring their impact. You could make the plan sharper by identifying interim milestones that detail what you expect teaching and learning to look like at regular intervals. This would support governors in holding you and other leaders to account for the improvements.

You have increased the frequency with which you are monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in classes. You now spend more time looking at pupils' work in their books to evaluate the impact of teaching over time. Your written records however show that you focus too much on what the teacher is doing and do not pay enough attention to its impact on learning.

Governors want the very best for the school. They have had training to help them better understand the school's assessment data. However, they now need to put their foot down on the pedal and ensure that the pace of improvement increases. As yet, they are not skilled enough at holding leaders to account and additional support or training is required to ensure that this aspect of their work develops quickly.

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 identifies Churchfields as a high priority school. It has allocated subject consultants to provide support to the school. Governors value the support that has been provided to manage financial and human resources as well as expertise provided to ensure that building works do not distract the headteacher from improving teaching and learning. However, governors are critical of other aspects, such as the challenge provided by the local authority. They believe that the local authority does not know the school well enough. Governors are not skilled enough to hold school leaders adequately to account and this level of challenge is not coming from other sources.

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

Yours sincerely

Adam Higgins  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**