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Nina Saunders  
Headteacher  
Merstham Primary School  
London Road South  
Redhill  
RH1 3AZ

Dear Mrs Saunders

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

Following my visit to your school on 13 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.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated a range of documentation including the school improvement plan, information relating to the monitoring of teaching and minutes of meetings of the governing body. Short visits were made to all classes, where I looked at pupils' books and spoke to them about their work.

## **Main findings**

You have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. You are clear about the priorities for improvement and that better quality teaching is crucial to this. The restructuring of the leadership team is further strengthening the capacity for improvement because areas of responsibility and accountability have been clarified.

You have sharpened the use of data through the introduction of regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress. As a result you have set clear expectations of the progress pupils should be making and raised teachers' awareness of the performance of the most vulnerable pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants attend these meetings and this means there is greater communication and awareness of pupils' performance and needs. The system for tracking pupils' progress is enabling you to judge the impact of the support being given to pupils and you are adapting this support when necessary. As a result pupils are making better progress in most year groups.

You have provided valuable training to teachers in using a problem solving approach to teach mathematics. The monitoring of planning and teaching practice shows teachers increasingly using this approach in their lessons. Teachers are sharing good practice with each other, indicating their increased confidence in teaching the subject this way. As a result, the profile of mathematics is being raised across the school, for example through engaging displays of pupils' mathematical work. Pupils talked with enthusiasm and confidence about their work in mathematics.

The development of pupils' literacy skills is a key focus for improvement. Pupils are being given more opportunities to complete longer pieces of writing that cover a variety of styles and subjects. The work to explore pupils' views has provided valuable information about writing. You have used this to develop writing experiences that interest and enthuse pupils. You have established high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work through your policy. Work in pupils' books shows that teachers are applying a consistent approach to the presentation of English tasks. However, inconsistencies remain in the presentation of mathematical work. Some poorly presented work is not being challenged by teachers.

Roles with the Early Years Foundation Stage team have been clarified so that areas of responsibility and accountability are more clearly defined. Consequently planning has improved significantly so that activities are more relevant to pupils' needs. You have provided effective training and support for this, including visits to a local outstanding school. However, while activities are better planned, inconsistency remains about how well some adults support pupils' progress because their communication with and engagement of pupils is ineffective.

Governors have improved their understanding of assessment information and now have a good understanding of how this information should influence planning. Regular visits by members of the governing body are enabling them to collect valuable information about the school's work. They are using this information to ask more challenging questions of the school's leaders.

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 partially funded the support of a Local Leader of Education. This has provided valuable support and guidance to the headteacher. The local authority has also brokered the support of an external consultant with expertise in the Early Years Foundation Stage to join the governing body in March. The local authority's human resources department has given useful advice relating to personnel issues.

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

Yours sincerely

Lisa Moore

**Her Majesty's Inspector**