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1 May 2014

Jen Harvey and Susie Silvester  
Acting Headteachers  
Peacehaven Heights Primary School  
Hodder Avenue  
Peacehaven  
BN10 7QY

Dear Mrs Harvey and Mrs Silvester

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Peacehaven Heights Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 1 May 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 January 2014. 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 executive headteacher and other senior leaders, and members of the governing body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone. The school improvement plan was evaluated. We visited classrooms on both sites, and I observed Key Stage 1 children at lunchtime. I had brief discussions with a few members of staff, and scrutinised a selection of pupils' books.

### **Context**

Since the inspection, governors have appointed a substantive headteacher who will join the school in September 2014. The school has continued to employ the

executive headteacher, whose support was initially brokered by the local authority, until the end of July 2014.

## **Main findings**

Since the inspection you have focused even more keenly on the areas identified for improvement and this is reflected well in the school action plan. Your positive and committed leadership, well supported by the work of the executive headteacher, has ensured that all staff are embracing necessary changes and have quickly begun to improve their practice. For example, you have significantly raised the profile of the importance of good handwriting for all pupils through better planning by teachers. Pupils now have increased opportunities to practise their handwriting and are further encouraged by inspiring wall displays and a good reward system. Improvements in handwriting since the inspection are tangible in pupils' books and in classrooms.

Subject leaders are benefiting from more collaboration across the key stages; as a result their leadership is now more consistent and sharply focused on pupil achievement. This work has also enabled you to firm up an appropriate structure for effective leadership in the school. Higher expectations of all pupils are beginning to show a positive impact: a higher proportion of pupils in Year 6 are gaining higher levels in reading and writing and more pupils are making better progress in mathematics.

The system for tracking pupils' progress is now embedded. It has corresponded with useful training for teachers on how to use this information more effectively. Teachers now attend meetings with you in which they are held to account for the achievement of the pupils they teach. This has already started to bear fruit: higher ability pupils in Year 6, for example, are now making much more rapid progress than in previous years, and most pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding are now achieving as well as their peers.

Following good training for teachers in these areas, you have enhanced the rigour of lesson observations by concentrating on how teachers use questioning to challenge and stretch pupils in lessons, and their feedback. Your judgments about standards of teaching are now rightly informed by the progress that pupils are making and by the quality of teachers' marking and feedback. Pupils' books show higher quality marking with useful feedback and good pupil responses to teachers' comments, which demonstrate how their learning is moving forward. Impressive 'writing walls' allow teachers, pupils and parents to see pupils' improvements in writing over time in a practical way.

Following an external review of governance, the governing body has made good strides forward since the inspection. Committees have been re-structured and now have an identified aspect of the school improvement plan to oversee. Initial training

on understanding data about pupils' achievement has been useful. This will be supplemented by further work with the local authority to ensure that all governors can understand how well pupils are achieving and can challenge any underperformance. Governors are now more acutely aware of the need to track the progress of all groups of pupils in the school. The expertise of the local authority governor is being well used to support improvement.

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 school has continued to benefit from the support of the executive headteacher which was brokered by the local authority. This has become even more robust since the inspection, increasing the pace of improvement. Several of the expert teachers from his school have offered effective coaching to teachers at Peacehaven Heights and this has resulted in a much more consistent approach to, for example, assessment and feedback. Regular monitoring through advisor visits and reviews of progress data ensures that school leaders are held to account. Local authority officers report observing improving standards in teaching and learning, and sharper challenge offered by the governing body.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for East Sussex.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Anwar  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**