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9 May 2014

Andrea de Bunsen  
Headteacher  
Kennel Lane School  
Kennel Lane  
Bracknell  
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Bracknell Forest  
RG42 2EX

Dear Ms de Bunsen

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Kennel Lane School**

Following my visit to your school on 8 May 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2013.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair, the Chief Adviser Learning and Achievement, and the adviser commissioned by the local authority to provide support to the school. The local authority's statement of action and the school improvement plan were evaluated. Other documentary evidence, including minutes of meetings, notes of visit from consultants and the school's analysis of progress and achievement data, was also scrutinised. A tour of the school was conducted.

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection one member of teaching staff has left the school and another has taken maternity leave. These posts have been successfully filled. Another member of teaching staff will be leaving at the end of the academic year and a senior leader will be taking maternity leave. Appropriate recruitment processes are underway.

## **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

The headteacher, senior leaders, local authority and governing body have thoroughly reviewed the findings of the previous inspection. Individually, and collectively, they are able to specify weaknesses in practice over time that led to the inadequate judgement of November 2013. Without doubt there is a sense of team spirit and shared responsibility to drive up standards and secure the necessary improvements within as short a period of time as possible. All parties articulated confidence in each other.

Improvement plans are in place, although there is some unnecessary duplication between the post-Ofsted raising-attainment plan and the school improvement plan. It has already been agreed between school leaders and governors that these plans should be streamlined for the start of the next academic year. In places, the success criteria lack sharpness and are not overtly related to improving outcomes for pupils. However, most urgent priorities are clearly identified, being acted upon and understood by staff.

Assessments of pupils' progress and levels of attainment are accepted to have been inaccurate over time. Some assessments have been over-optimistic and others overly cautious. Addressing this has rightly been the school's number one priority. Systems and practices for assessing pupils' levels of attainment, setting targets and tracking progress towards targets have been revised, strengthened and shared with all staff and are recorded in the 'Assessment, recording and reporting framework'. Staff have undertaken training, including moderation exercises and visits to look at assessment processes in a local outstanding school, to raise their skill and confidence in this aspect of their work.

An external review of governance has been completed, as has a governing body self-evaluation. Governors have acquired a greater understanding of their strategic role and the need to ensure they are adequately skilled and knowledgeable in order to fully hold senior leaders to account. Governors know they must particularly develop greater confidence in interpreting the range of school data. Governors bring a wealth of relevant skills and expertise to their roles and display an evident determination to secure improvement.

The local authority's statement of action clearly addresses all of the issues identified at the November inspection. Although detailed records and evaluations of actions exist in different formats and places, for example in notes of visits or minutes of meetings, the brief termly evaluations contained within the statement of action are too vague. This was discussed during the monitoring visit and it was agreed that this aspect of the document would be improved at the next planned update.

Support from the local authority to the school is appropriate, proportionate and of high quality. The brokered link with an outstanding school is providing teachers and leaders with opportunities to observe and learn from expert colleagues. The commissioned support from an external adviser is adding structure and rigour to school improvement activities. The Monitoring Intervention Board meets regularly, challenges leaders and governors about the steps they have taken to bring about improvement, records and evaluates progress and ensures next steps are clear.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may appoint one newly qualified teacher on the understanding that the local authority's representative (attached adviser) endorses the appointment.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Education Funding Agency, and the Director of Children's Services for Bracknell Forest. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Macdonald  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**