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5 June 2014

Mrs Lucinda Clements  
Headteacher  
Purbrook Infant School  
Aldermoor Road East  
Waterlooville  
PO7 5NQ

Dear Mrs Clements

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Purbrook Infant School**

Following my visit to your school on 5 June 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 third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are now 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 all pupils, including those of middle ability, make better progress and reach national expectations
- share examples of good and better teaching with all staff
- improve the skills of existing senior and middle leaders in order to reduce reliance on external support.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, a group of middle leaders, the seconded senior leader and three representatives from the Governing Body. I also had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. Information about pupils' progress, school action plans, governors' minutes, local authority progress reviews and other documentation relating to school improvement were evaluated. You took me on a tour of the school to observe teaching in all classes and to view the changes to displays and the school environment.

## **Context**

A new teacher of Year 2 joined the school at the start of the summer term. Another teacher has returned from long-term absence.

## **Main findings**

Following the previous monitoring inspection visit when I judged that actions taken to improve the school were ineffective, you have taken decisive action and galvanised staff to make essential improvements. There are continued concerns about staff changes and unfilled vacancies, but these are no longer being used as an excuse for slow improvement. You now provide clearer direction and demonstrate more ambition and determination to improve the school. For example, you took swift action to ensure that classrooms were tidied up and corridors cleared. Classroom displays are used more effectively to support pupils' day-to-day learning and corridors now celebrate pupils' achievements. You and the staff are taking much more pride in the more orderly and attractive appearance of the school.

You have made sure that the quality of teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is better. The classroom areas are brighter, tidier and more welcoming. Increased opportunities for talk, writing, reading and number work are clearly evident. The outdoor area has been reorganised with structured and purposeful tasks. There is clear evidence that teachers are taking much more account of individual children's abilities and needs when planning activities. Teachers and teaching assistants question children effectively and check progress throughout the lessons. As a result, children are making much better progress and are being well-prepared for Year 1. During the monitoring inspection, it was a pleasure to observe children practising writing, reading books, engaged in sustained role-play and solving scientific and number problems, all on the theme of spiders. Attractive displays celebrating children's art work supported this theme.

Handwriting is improving and more pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 are holding their pencils properly because they have been provided with aids to help them.

Now that you have given the school a clearer sense of drive and direction, improvements in teaching are accelerating. However, teaching still requires improvement overall. There is not enough securely good teaching to share confidently with other staff as a model of good practice. In some cases, teachers concentrate their energies too much on what techniques and resources might work well in a lesson, rather than focusing closely on what their pupils need to know, practise and understand. In some lessons teachers do not insist that pupils are fully attentive when listening to questions and explanations, and in a few cases, pupils are not productive enough because they do not give tasks their full concentration.

Pupils' attainment and progress still require improvement. The most able pupils in Year 2 have made better progress recently in mathematics and reading levels are above the national average. However, current levels for a significant majority of Year 2 pupils are lower than national expectations. You have recognised this and are taking steps to ensure that appropriate extra support compensates for the legacy of poor teaching, so that pupils leaving the school are better equipped for the next steps in their education.

Following my last monitoring inspection you have greatly improved the way that you present and analyse information about pupils' progress. You are now measuring progress from pupils' starting points which is allowing you to have a more accurate and realistic picture of how well they are doing. For example, although you rightly note that some pupils with special educational needs are making faster progress and catching up, their levels of attainment are still too low. Teachers and the local authority confirm that pupil progress meetings are more challenging and focused on the achievement of individual pupils.

Governors have increased their direct involvement in the school and have strengthened their understanding of pupils' progress. The headteacher's report is thorough and provides governors with the information they need to hold the school to account. However, although governors ask challenging questions about pupils' progress and the use of the pupil premium funding, they have not pushed hard enough for improvements in teaching.

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**

Since the previous monitoring inspection visit, the local authority has stepped up the level of support, particularly for leadership and management. The school has also benefited from strong support for English, mathematics and the Early Years Foundation Stage. The local authority brokered a link with a good school, which has helped to refresh teachers' energy and enthusiasm. The seconded leader has also provided extremely valuable support with school leaders' evaluation of teaching and pupils' progress. The local authority has also ensured that governors have received useful support and guidance. Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants would further benefit from observing good and outstanding teaching in the partner school.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce

**Her Majesty's Inspector**