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15 July 2014

Nigel Turner  
Headteacher  
William Rhodes Primary School  
Hunloke Avenue  
Boythorpe  
Chesterfield  
S40 2NR

Dear Mr Turner

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to William Rhodes Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 14 July 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- amend the school improvement plan so that it is fit for purpose
- arrange appropriate training for teachers in order to help them improve their practice
- ensure the excellent marking of students' work in literacy and mathematics takes place in other subject areas.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the assistant headteacher, a Local Leader of Education who is supporting the school, five members of the governing body, a National Leader of Governance who is supporting the chair of governors, and two representatives of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the

last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan. I scrutinised and evaluated school documentation. The assistant headteacher took me on a tour of the school and we visited every classroom.

## **Context**

On the day this inspection took place, you were absent due to ill health.

## **Main findings**

I noted in my last letter that pupils' achievement declined in 2013 when compared to 2012, and that therefore you faced even greater challenges than those which were outlined during your last full inspection. Pupil achievement, in terms of the amount of progress made by the school's Year 6 pupils, has declined further this year. You have not acted quickly enough to tackle this underachievement. Your projections of pupil achievement for Year 6 pupils in 2014 were inaccurate.

Your plans to improve the school are not as clear as they need to be. You were asked to address this issue after my previous monitoring visit but the school's improvement plans are still not suitable. Not all members of staff fully understand their role in improving the school. There is not enough priority given in plans to improving the quality of teaching.

There is no way to accurately tell whether the quality of teaching in the school is improving. You have identified areas of development for teachers but there is little in place to help them address these in terms of professional development training.

The quality of teachers' marking is a strength of the school, particularly that which takes place in literacy and mathematics. This is not always the case in other subjects, such as humanities and science.

Levels of achievement have improved in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and rates of progress have increased in Years 1 and 2 in phonics. The data collected by senior leaders about pupil outcomes show that pupils in Year 5 have made improved progress this year.

Pupils are keen to learn and there was a positive atmosphere evident during my visits to classrooms. Displays around the school, including those in classrooms, are vibrant and make a contribution to the learning which takes place.

At the time of my last visit, the Chair of the Governing Body was beginning a drive to recruit more governors. This has been very successful. Six new governors have been appointed, and one has resigned. This has revitalised the governing body. There is a genuine enthusiasm and commitment to improve the prospects of pupils in the school and governors are determined to hold school leaders to account more robustly than in the past. All new governors have had induction training; all

governors have had data training from the local authority. A National Leader of Governance is offering effective and much valued support to the chair of governors. As a result, the governing body is now in stronger position than it was at the time of my last visit.

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**

Representatives of the local authority have arranged support for you from a Local Leader of Education. They have also arranged support from a local school in the teaching of phonics and this has had a positive impact on both the quality of teaching and on achievement in this area. The local authority's senior adviser is working closely with you and with the chair of governors with a view to improving the outcomes of pupils in the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian McNeilly  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**