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17 October 2014

Mrs Sue Preston  
Headteacher  
Gillingham Primary School  
School Road  
Gillingham  
SP8 4QR

Dear Mrs Preston,

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

Following my visit to your school on 17 October 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in May 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 I met with you, your senior and middle leaders, the local authority representative and members of the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the most recent inspection. Together we carried out brief visits to lessons, spoke with pupils and reviewed their work in books. The current school improvement plan was also evaluated.

### **Context**

Since the inspection four middle leaders and three new governors have been appointed.

## **Main findings**

You acknowledge the inspection was the catalyst necessary to bring about an increased drive and commitment from all staff to secure higher standards for pupils and particularly the most able. You have worked determinedly since the inspection to secure consistently good teaching throughout the school and this has begun to show improved rates of progress for pupils, especially the youngest children and pupils in Key Stage 1. The changes you have introduced to the structure of the school day have established a much more purposeful learning atmosphere throughout the school. You have also successfully introduced a revised school improvement plan to include the recommendations made in the inspection report. For example, a whole school approach to marking and feedback has been agreed and implemented so that pupils know what they need to do to improve. Although teachers are regularly and conscientiously marking pupils' work there is little evidence of feedback promoting further learning and progress for pupils. However, you are acutely aware that the success of the school depends on securing as quickly as possible lasting improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. To this end you are in the process of providing your staff with personal improvement targets tailored to the specific learning needs the pupils and linked to the school improvement plan.

Since the inspection you have enhanced the role and responsibilities of your middle leaders. For example, you have allocated time for them to check on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements in the subjects they are responsible for. As a result, the professional conversations now beginning to take place between staff are providing you, your senior leaders and governors with a clearer understanding of the progress pupils are making, each teacher's strengths and their development needs. Middle leaders confirmed in conversation that they are receiving additional training and developing a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities which they appreciate.

Members of the governing body who met with me confirmed the inspection has resulted in all staff working more closely together to focus on addressing areas for improvement. They have full confidence in you and your senior leaders. The good communications that already exist between you, your senior leaders and governors are being further enhanced as middle leaders begin to take up their new responsibilities. Governors who spoke with me confirm there is a greater sense of urgency within the school to bring about the necessary improvements and they are more proactive in holding the school to account. Governors are confident that appropriate support is in place to support and maintain the well-being of the headteacher and all staff. They are confident that weaker teaching is now being addressed in a timely manner.

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 provided timely support to the headteacher and other leaders. For example, the local authority representative has worked with the school to sharpen the school improvement plan. The governors' monitoring group that was introduced following the inspection to check on how well the school is addressing areas for improvement is also attended by the local authority representative. A programme of training for all governors and especially those newly appointed has been introduced.

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

Yours sincerely

David Edwards  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**