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2 December 2014

Ms Y Ashraf  
Headteacher  
Sheddingdean Community Primary School  
Petworth Drive  
Burgess Hill  
RH15 8JT

Dear Ms Ashraf

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sheddingdean Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 2 December 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 September 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. The school should take further action to:

- add milestones to the school improvement plan, so governors and leaders can check over time that planned actions are helping pupils to learn more
- further develop senior leaders so they are more able to help improve teaching
- make sure teachers and teaching assistants have consistently high expectations of behaviour during lessons
- develop the teaching and learning of basic writing skills, including handwriting and use of punctuation.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We visited classrooms, during which I scrutinised work in pupils' books. I also evaluated the school improvement plan.

## **Main findings**

The actions you have taken to tackle the areas for improvement are relevant and are helping the school to improve. The action plan is clear and focused. However, it does not include timely milestones by which governors and leaders can check your intended actions are helping pupils to learn more, and that long-term academic targets will be hit.

The regular checks on teaching carried out by you and the deputy headteacher focus well on teachers' planning, the teaching in lessons and what pupils learn as a result. The feedback you give is helping teachers to improve their practice. Senior leaders have a good understanding of their areas of responsibility and have taken effective steps to improve the curriculum for reading and mathematics, for example the increased opportunities for reading and the new mathematics scheme. However, they are not yet involved enough in observing lessons and helping teachers to improve their practice.

Governors' skills and expertise are developing as a result of training on how to interpret assessment information about pupils' progress. Their knowledge of their roles and how to hold you to account is improving. The review of governance has been delayed because the local authority requested they complete an internal audit.

Governors and leaders have taken urgent action to improve the learning environment, such as clearing a storage room to create an attractive and purposeful library. This is also used effectively for teaching small groups of pupils, and is a positive step in your plans to improve reading skills and promote a love of reading.

The website is now compliant. The curriculum information in poster form is interesting and informative for parents. Similarly the section on how the school organises support for pupils with special educational needs is relevant, useful and up-to-date.

The new system for recording and analysing pupils' progress is much more accessible. Teachers, leaders and governors have been trained to understand and use the information in their different roles. This is helping everyone to focus

appropriately on how much pupils are learning, and to recognise what more needs to happen for the pupils whose progress is slower.

You have taken some effective steps to improve pupils' learning behaviour, such as introducing strategies to encourage pupils to be independent, rather than waiting for the teacher to be available. This is helping them use learning time more purposefully. However, standards of behaviour in some lessons are not high enough and some pupils are not concentrating enough on what is being taught.

The inclusion manager has implemented sensible changes to the way disadvantaged pupils are supported through the use of the pupil premium funding. Although it is too soon to see accelerated progress, the signs are positive, such as improved attendance and punctuality.

You have taken positive steps to develop basic reading and mathematics skills, such as the short daily sessions for phonics (how letters link to sounds), and the mathematics breakfast club to provide additional support for those who have not made expected progress. However, not enough has been done to improve the teaching of punctuation, grammar and handwriting.

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**

You are making good use of the support provided by the local authority, such as the advice provided on assessment, guidance on the school improvement plan and training for teachers and teaching assistant in phonics, all of which have helped the school to move forward. It is also positive that you are utilising the expertise of a local school to provide support for senior leaders and governors. The local authority needs to prioritise the review of governance to support governors in their work to become more effective.

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

Yours sincerely

Louise Adams

**Seconded Inspector**