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5 July 2016

Mrs G Gandolfo  
Gilbert Scott Primary School  
Farnborough Avenue  
South Croydon  
Surrey  
CR2 8HD

Dear Mrs Gandolfo

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Gilbert Scott Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 June 2016, 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 June 2015. 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 in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure the checks that school leaders undertake on the quality of teaching and learning focus more closely on the accelerated progress that pupils are making over time, so that higher standards are reached.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and leaders responsible for the early years, literacy and mathematics to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection. I met with a representative from the local authority and with six members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-

chair. I spoke with a group of pupils and looked at work in pupils' books. You and I together undertook a learning walk, visiting every class in the school. I scrutinised the school's development plan and other documentation, including minutes from governing body meetings, records relating to the monitoring of teaching and the school's most recent information on how well pupils are progressing and their outcomes. I also met with the school's bursar to review records relating to keeping children safe.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection, three newly qualified teachers have been appointed and six new governors have joined the governing body.

## **Main findings**

You, your staff and governors have made good use of the findings from the section 5 inspection to devise a well-considered school development plan. This plan sets out the school's key priorities and identifies clear actions to help you achieve your objectives. Changes are being made, as governors are currently developing the process of monitoring and evaluating planned actions further. They are keen to prioritise next term's scheduled governor visits to the school, to focus more directly on evaluating the progress made against key actions. This will enable governors to provide further challenge and support, ensuring swift changes to the development plan if required.

Teaching is improving. This has resulted from establishing more robust systems for reviewing the work of teachers and the introduction of a new tracking system for staff to use and record pupils' progress. You are aware that for standards to be in line with national expectations at the end of Year 6, accelerated progress needs to be made by the pupils currently at the school. However, you do not yet track how many pupils are making accelerated progress.

In order to improve the quality of teaching, many opportunities are now in place for teachers to visit outstanding schools and gather ideas to inform their own practice. These visits have resulted in many changes. These changes, such as the review of the school's marking policy and a whole-school approach to the planning of questions to support pupils' learning, are contributing to improved teaching and pupil progress. However, as seen in pupils' books and reflected in the school's own tracking information, some inconsistencies remain. Leaders are aware of the need to ensure that the checks they make on the quality of teaching and learning result in higher standards across the school.

Excellent support is being provided by the local authority to develop and strengthen the quality of leadership in literacy, mathematics and the early years. This support is ensuring that senior leaders can demonstrate the improvements that are taking place. There has been a full review of literacy, including a re-levelling of books

within the reading scheme and a new approach to the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make). Phonics is now taught frequently and tracked very systematically, resulting in pupils making good progress. Consequently, a significant increase is predicted in the proportion of Year 1 pupils expected to meet the standard for 2016. In mathematics, training has helped all staff in improving the quality of planned lessons, supported also through the use of recently purchased resources. This is facilitating more opportunities for pupils to explain their reasoning when solving problems of increasing complexity. Progress in pupils' workbooks is showing improvement; however, standards by the end of Year 6 remain below those expected. This is particularly evident where pupils still have gaps in their knowledge and skills owing to weaker teaching in the past. In the early years, improved equipment and resourcing is ensuring children have more opportunities to explore and learn a wide range of skills in the outdoor area. This, along with a focus on improving adults' use of effective questioning, is resulting in good progress. Leaders predict that the number of children reaching a good level of development will be above the national average at the end of their Reception Year in 2016.

An external review of governance took place in December 2015. Governance is transformed. New governors have been appointed with a wider range of skills and expertise. These skills are targeted well, supporting the monitoring of improvements identified at the last inspection. Governors are committed to supporting continued improvement and have increased the level of challenge to school leaders. Governors are aware that there is still much to do and are fully committed to making the necessary changes in order to provide more effective strategic leadership. They have secured an experienced, interim executive headteacher to oversee the leadership of the school following your planned retirement at the end of this term. Their actions are providing the school with increased leadership capacity while exploring further options to ensure leadership succession for the school.

### **External support**

The school and governors have received helpful and well-targeted support from the local authority. The local authority has also provided challenge to the school about its performance through 'school performance review meetings'.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Croydon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jean Thwaites  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**