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2 July 2013

Karen Porteous  
Headteacher  
Barrow Hill Primary School  
Station Road  
Barrow Hill  
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Dear Mrs Porteous

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Barrow Hill Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 1 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings of my visit. 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 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you and other senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I considered your monitoring of teaching and learning, and your most recent data on the attainment and progress of pupils. I evaluated your school improvement plan as well as additional plans developed by leaders of English and mathematics. We conducted a tour of the school. I considered monitoring reports produced by governors and scrutinised the minutes of meetings of the governing body.

### **Context**

The governing body have made three appointments. A permanent key stage 1 teacher commenced her role on 15 April 2013. The new deputy headteacher took up

his post on 1 June 2013. An additional teacher has been appointed who will work alongside the deputy headteacher in the mixed-age Key Stage 2 class from September 2013. Prior to these appointments, the school had a long period of staffing instability.

### **Main findings**

Since the inspection, you have provided a clear sense of direction so that newly appointed and existing staff are focusing upon tackling the issues that require improvement.

You have improved the quality of teaching by ensuring that features which have been agreed to be implemented are being consistently applied in each classroom. Teachers are using assessment information to plan work which is matched to meet the wide range of needs of all pupils in each class. Teachers are checking more frequently how well pupils are doing during lessons and providing additional challenge or support when required. The improvements in teaching are reflected in pupils in all year groups making accelerated rates of progress in English and mathematics. However, pupils in Year 3 and 4 have gaps in their knowledge and skills and are attaining below the expectations for their age.

The new leaders of English and mathematics have quickly implemented actions to improve teaching by leading professional development. As a result, teachers are making sure that pupils are being provided with more opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in mathematics, by solving problems and undertaking investigations. Pupils are able to apply their skills in writing to produce more detailed pieces of work in subjects such as history and geography.

The new leaders have developed suitable action plans to improve teaching even further. However, their plans do not have criteria for measuring success which are sharply focused on the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils. This makes it difficult for governors and yourself to readily check the impact of their actions.

Evidence from governing body minutes reveals that the governors increasingly challenge you about the performance of the school. This reflects the higher expectations which they have about the school's performance. Governors have demonstrated decisive leadership through taking difficult decisions to secure additional staffing in order to support the needs of pupils in Key Stage 2.

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:

- accelerate further the progress of pupils in the current Year 3 and Year 4 cohorts in English and mathematics

## PROTECT-INSPECTION



- improve subject action plans by sharpening success criteria relating to the progress and attainment of groups of pupils, so that you can evaluate the impact of leaders' actions over time.

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 continues to provide good levels of support and challenge to the school. Teachers have benefitted from advice about developing pupils' skills in reading. The resulting improvement in the quality of teaching of reading has led to pupils attaining higher standards at the end of Year 1 and Year 2.

The new leaders of English and mathematics have responded quickly to guidance which they have received from consultants about the actions which ensure effective subject leadership.

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

Yours sincerely

David Carter  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**