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2 December 2014

Mrs Cathy Beddows  
Headteacher  
Etchells Primary School  
East Avenue  
Heald Green  
Cheadle  
Cheshire  
SK8 3DL

Dear Mrs Beddows

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Etchells Primary School, Stockport**

Following my visit to your school on 1 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. At its previous section 5 inspection in April 2013 the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, members of the wider leadership team, three members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, the National Leader of Education assigned to the school, and a group of eight pupils to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I toured the school with you and together we sampled a range of pupils' work in English and mathematics books. A range of documentation was scrutinised, including minutes of meetings of the governing body's monitoring committee.

## **Main findings**

Leaders' plans for improvement are fit for purpose and contain challenging yet achievable targets. As headteacher, you are rightly focused on ensuring there is high quality teaching and learning for all pupils. Your determination that all, including leaders across the school, are accountable for the progress of pupils is correct. Revisions made to the school's systems for managing teacher performance are assisting this drive and are leading to targeted support and challenge where it is needed most. As a result, the pace of planned improvement is right. Both you and the governing body know no time can be lost. The governing body's questioning is holding leaders to account increasingly well. Governors share your high expectations.

The non-negotiables set out in 'The Etchells Way' are paying dividends. In pupils' English books, for example, there is evidence of forensic marking outlining to pupils strengths in their work and the next steps they should take to improve. Furthermore, marking of such quality sets additional challenges to pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Such responses are checked by teachers. As a result, improvements are evident across the school in the quality of pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation. Pupils spoken with reported how they too see improvements in their written work.

The picture of consistency in marking in mathematics is less strong. There is not always the expectation that pupils will respond to the comments made by teachers. This sometimes leads to errors and misconceptions being repeated. In addition, problem solving activities are not always used to best effect. Sometimes, they are the final activity, meaning not all pupils attempt them. On other occasions, the key questions asked are not clear meaning pupils complete operations they can do already rather than applying those operations in different contexts to deepen their understanding.

The skills of the wider leadership team are developing as a result of your clear focus and the support the school receives from the local authority and National Leader of Education. Rightly, leaders' focus has been on ensuring the non-negotiables outlined in 'The Etchells Way' are being adhered to. Staff in the wider leadership team understand they now need to ensure their checking measures the impact of actions undertaken on the quality of teaching and learning.

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 and National Leader of Education are supporting and challenging leaders well. Their focus on developing the skills of the wider leadership team so

they may support the headteacher in driving forward improvements is most appropriate.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Williams

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority