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21 January 2013

Mrs Lindsay Addington  
Headteacher  
Little Heaton Church of England Primary School  
Boardman Lane  
Middleton  
Manchester  
M24 4PU

Dear Mrs Addington

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Little Heaton Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 18 January 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, independent consultant and headteacher of the partner primary school (Broadfield), three members of the Governing Body, and two representatives of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated, along with other documents such as: records of staff training activities and plans; the teaching and learning policy and monitoring of teaching; minutes of governing body meetings; local authority consultant records of visits.

**Context**

There have been no staff changes since the inspection in November, although one teacher is currently on sick leave.

## **Main findings**

There is a clear understanding that standards need to rise and therefore it is vital that pupils' rates of progress start to accelerate if their achievement is to move up to good. The school has used the recommendations from the Ofsted inspection to refocus its improvement planning, with the support of the local authority. The partnership between Little Heaton's headteacher, the headteacher of the partner school (Broadfield) and the external consultant is working effectively and the skills of individual members of the group are utilised well.

Actions were taken quickly following the inspection: the teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) was reviewed to ensure this is sufficiently well organised on a regular basis; scrutinies of pupils' books took place to emphasise the need to consider and improve the quality of presentation; the teaching and learning policy was revisited to develop with staff an agreed criteria and understanding of consistently good teaching. The impact of this was tested when the headteacher conducted joint observations of teaching with the head of the partner school. Common areas of strength and aspects requiring improvement were shared with staff following these observations and through 'learning walks' by leaders. As a result, teachers are developing their understanding of how to improve their teaching and provide evidence of the progress being made by all groups of pupils. Another benefit of the partnership arrangement is the opportunities staff have to liaise with other colleagues and work alongside each other to discuss issues, sharing ideas and best practice.

The work of the external consultant has included staff training in using guided reading sessions more effectively to teach key reading skills to pupils at all levels, making best use of the time allocated to this activity. Consequently, teachers are developing their knowledge of how to ensure that pupils are guided but also challenged at their individual levels of reading and comprehension. Strategies for motivating pupils and giving them the skills to write confidently and with enjoyment are being developed further in order to improve the quality of their work, such as through a boys' writing club.

A key feature of the school's positive ethos and its stronger capacity for improvement is the commitment of leaders and staff and strong teamwork. Teachers and support staff engage willingly in extra training and meetings, working alongside each other and colleagues in the partner school, to improve their practice.

The governing body is keen to develop its role and responsibilities further and play a full part in monitoring the school's progress. Governors have a better understanding of the importance of identifying and understanding the links between teacher performance and pupils' progress. They recognise the need to have clear and concise information from leaders in order to evaluate the progress that is being made towards the school's priorities for improvement. Consequently they are better equipped to hold the school to account for the progress pupils are making, while still recognising the school's strengths and offering their full support to the headteacher and staff.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommends that further action is taken to:

- encourage leaders and the governing body to take account of the Ofsted survey reports:  
'Moving English Forward'  
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/moving-english-forward>  
and  
'School Governance ; learning from the best'  
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/good-practice-resource-%E2%80%93-school-governance-learning-best>

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection

### **External support**

The local authority was already providing some guidance to the school prior to the inspection, for example in review meetings and consultant visits. The authority took effective action immediately following the inspection by formulating a bespoke support plan. This has enabled the school to make a swift start on its action planning and monitoring of progress. The local authority's brokering of the partnership arrangements with Broadfield Community School is having a positive impact on the school's capacity to accelerate the rate of improvement. The authority will continue to check on the school's progress through the regular contact of the school effectiveness officer, who attends some leadership meetings at the school and receives updates from senior leaders on the impact of actions being taken.

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

Yours sincerely

Marguerite Murphy

**Her Majesty's Inspector**