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6 February 2013

Michelle Gaydon Headteacher
Ayshea Mead Acting headteacher
Warton Archbishop Hutton's Primary School
Back Lane
Warton
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Dear Ms Gaydon and Ms Mead

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit to Warton Archbishop Hutton's Primary School on 6 February 2013

Following my visit to your school on 6 February 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 acting headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, the local authority adviser and the Local Leader of Education (LLE). HMI made a tour of the school. She evaluated the school improvement plan and scrutinised the minutes of the Governing Body meetings held since the inspection.

Context

There have been no changes to the staffing profile since the time of the inspection. At the time of this visit the headteacher was on absence leave and the senior teacher was acting headteacher. A supply teacher was covering the Reception class. Two new governors have been appointed to the governing body.

Main findings

Governors, senior leaders and staff have responded swiftly to the judgement of the section 5 inspection. Together they are determined to move the school to good as soon as possible. With the support of the local authority and the LLE, the school's improvement plan has been amended to ensure the recommendations from the inspection are the priorities for the school to work on. Staff and governors have all contributed to these amendments so that staff know their roles in improving the school. The plan includes the action to be taken and how the school will assess whether it has been successful. However, it does not set out clearly what will be achieved over a shorter time period so that the steps to good can be measured more distinctly.

The school has reviewed the information on pupils' progress so that it can be certain it is a true reflection of the level at which all pupils are working. This is especially so in Year 2 and Year 6 and reviewed, but still challenging, targets have been set for these pupils. This now provides a base from which senior leaders and governors can measure the rate of progress for all groups of pupils. Pupils' progress meetings have been introduced so that teachers can understand the progress information, use it more accurately when planning activities for all groups of pupils and be held responsible for the progress their pupils make. Teachers have visited the same year group teacher in the partner school to mark pupils' work together. This has led to increased confidence in teachers' skills in allocating the right grade to a piece of work. Similarly teachers have observed their partner teacher in the classroom with a focus on 'pace and high expectation'.

Governors have taken swift action to ensure the improvement of the school does not slip while the headteacher is absent. With the support of the local authority, they have appointed a senior teacher from within the school to act as headteacher. A local leader of education, from a local school, now provides high quality support for two days per week and professional links have been made between the two schools. Governors have an understanding of pupils' progress information and ask challenging questions of the leadership. However, they recognise that more training on this would be beneficial so that they can recognise the sort of information they can request from the school rather than rely on the information presented by the school. With the appointment of two new governors the Chair of Governors plans to review the committee structure so that expertise is used effectively and also to enable a smaller group of governors to meet more regularly to check that planned actions are having an effect on the achievement of pupils.

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

- make absolutely clear what action is expected to have been achieved over shorter timescales so that senior leaders, governors and staff can plot the progress of the school towards good
- use the Ofsted document 'Good governance' and planned training to develop appropriate strategies for governors to review committee responsibilities and enable them to plot progress more readily
- ensure plans to stabilise the staffing complement are carried out.

It would be helpful for the school to attend an Ofsted improvement seminar.

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

External support

The local authority officer has worked well with the school to ensure improvements continue despite the absence of the headteacher. The support and challenge from the local leader of education and his staff is providing the momentum for improvement. The recent joint activities have stimulated Warton Archbishop Hutton's teachers' enthusiasm and confidence, and have been mutually valuable.

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

Yours sincerely

Eileen Mulgrew
Her Majesty's Inspector