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25 March 2013

Mrs Karen Jackson  
Headteacher  
Briercliffe Community Primary School  
Delamere Road  
Briercliffe  
Burnley  
Lancashire  
BB10 2JU

Dear Mrs Jackson

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Briercliffe Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 25 March 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 December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the English subject leader and the Chair of the Governing Body. HMI held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. The amended school development plan, evaluations from monitoring and data concerning pupils' progress were scrutinised.

**Context**

In January 2013, the appointed deputy headteacher took up her role and is teaching a class of Year 4 pupils. A temporary teacher is working with pupils in Year 2 while the Key Stage 1 leader is on a two term secondment to another school in the local authority.

## **Main findings**

The staff have accepted the findings of the Section 5 inspection and are working together to bring about improvement. They are building on the work begun in the autumn term to improve pupils' achievement in writing but are also looking closely at the teaching of reading. The school's action plan has been amended to cover all the aspects for improvement in the Section 5 report. Responsibilities are clear as are the targets for spring and summer, and the procedures to monitor and evaluate progress. The plan is guiding what staff do and much has been achieved this term, including reviews of practice, training to increase subject knowledge and visits to other schools to see effective practice. Data gathered in the spring term indicates milestone targets are being met in teaching and pupils' progress.

The deputy headteacher has added significantly to the leadership of the school and to the impetus for improvement. Her 'fresh eyes' and knowledge of effective practice have helped to identify where changes in working practice will benefit children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. For example, there is now a stronger emphasis on Reception children seeing adults write. Resources are also organised to encourage children to write as part of all activities indoors and out.

The joint working of the deputy headteacher and English subject leader has had a positive impact. For instance, their reviews and observations of practice have shown inconsistencies in how guided reading and phonics were taught. This has prompted organisational changes and support for staff in planning sessions and using resources. Staff are aware of the need to motivate pupils, especially boys, to read and write; the displays of books and introduction of 'writer of the week' are useful steps forward. Having evaluated the impact of different support programmes to boost pupils' reading and writing, there is now scope to build on what has proved to be the most effective and to probe further into what is hindering pupils' progress.

Given that many governors are new to the role, the governing body has set up a Strategic and Consultative Committee of three, including the Chair of the Governing Body, to monitor the school's progress. These governors have reviewed the school's action plan and agreed the intended outcomes. The plan refers to reports to be submitted to the governing body by the headteacher and others, but says little on how governors can gather and collate evidence to support their critical role.

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 recommend that further action is taken to:

- identify exactly where the weaknesses in writing lie
- use focussed observations in the teaching of English to identify effective practice in boosting pupils' learning
- identify ways in which the governing body can monitor and gather evidence of the school's progress in relation to the improvement plan.

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

### **External support**

The headteacher has sought and acted on advice. The school has drawn on guidance from the local authority in compiling the action plan, identifying where input from local authority consultants could be helpful and schools where practice is effective. Briercliffe has forged a link with an outstanding similar school and staff have also visited two other schools to look at the teaching of writing. The school has been working with external consultants to develop teaching and learning.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director for Children and Young People for Lancashire and as below.

Yours sincerely

Sonja Øyen  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**