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18 April 2013

Mr S Smalley  
Executive Headteacher  
Cherry Fold Primary School  
Cog Lane  
Burnley  
Lancashire  
BB11 5JS

Dear Mr Smalley

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Cherry Fold Primary School, Lancashire**

Following my visit to your school on 17 April 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with yourself, with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and with a representative of the local authority. I made brief visits to most classes, evaluated the school development plan and considered other documents related to the school's improvement.

**Context**

School staffing is stable. You continue to lead the school as executive headteacher, as well as being the substantive headteacher of Barden Primary School, which was judged to be good at its most recent inspection. On the days when you are at Barden, Cherry Fold is led by the deputy headteacher. The school continues to experience a higher than average level of pupil transience. Since the section 5 inspection, the total number of pupils on roll has increased to 326. Plans have been developed for the school to operate as a two-form entry primary school from September 2013.

## **Main findings**

The key areas for improvement identified in the last section 5 inspection reflect those in the school's improvement plan. The plan is comprehensive and clear. Progress in implementing the plan is regularly reviewed. The work that was underway to raise standards at the time of the last inspection has been continued. Evidence from the school's own data, based on moderated teachers' assessments of pupils' work, indicates that standards are rising. Leaders know that accelerating pupils' progress is the key to the school's future success. They have secured the enthusiastic commitment of staff to achieve this improvement.

Staff are receiving training to develop teaching, particularly in phonics (sounds and letters) and writing. The deputy headteacher's expertise in numeracy is being put to good use in training and coaching staff. Senior leaders monitor the impact of training and provide regular feedback to teachers. Leaders are aware that there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across classes and are firmly focused on the steps to be taken to ensure that all teaching is at least solidly good. There are appropriate plans to enhance the role and impact of subject leaders.

Teachers are working hard to find ways of engaging pupils in the writing process by finding interesting contexts, purposes and audiences for their work. Pupils' work is regularly assessed. The curriculum is under review and opportunities for developing literacy in different subjects are being considered. There is comparatively little pupils' work displayed in classrooms as a stimulus for learning and celebration of achievement. Leaders recognise that this is an area for further development.

Governors are updated on the school's improvement through detailed and candid reports to their standards and effectiveness committee. They are ambitious for pupils' success and readily challenge senior leaders, for instance by setting high expectations as to the quality of the school's reading books. Governors are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching in the school and have well-considered plans to deepen their understanding of the curriculum by establishing individual links with specific classes. They receive detailed information on which to base spending decisions. Recent investment in high quality outdoor play equipment for younger pupils has enhanced the range of opportunities for physical and imaginative play. Pupils' views about school improvement are increasingly taken into account by leaders and governors.

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, I recommend that further action is taken to:

- develop the internal environment of the school to celebrate children's achievements, particularly in writing.

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

## **External support**

The support provided by the local authority is highly valued by the school's leaders and governors. Two school advisers provide complementary, effective support and challenge to the school, including by reporting to the standards and effectiveness committee of the governing body. There was a local authority audit of teaching prior to the last inspection and another is planned for later in the summer term. These audits include moderation of senior leaders' judgements about the quality of teaching. The school has received consultant support, arranged by the local authority, for the development of effective practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for the teaching of literacy. Support from the local authority's human resources section is valued by senior leaders. The school is outward-facing in seeking out good practice in other primary schools, including its partner school.

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

Yours sincerely

Shirley Gornall

**Her Majesty's Inspector**