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2 May 2013

Mrs Lynn Lawson  
Headteacher  
Lepton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior, Infant and Nursery School  
Station Road  
Lepton  
Huddersfield  
West Yorkshire  
HD8 0DE

Dear Mrs Lawson

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Lepton Church of England  
Voluntary Controlled Junior, Infant and Nursery School**

Following my visit to your school on 30 April and 1 May 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2012. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during the inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all of the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director for Children & Young People for Kirklees and the Director of Wakefield Diocese.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Olsson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2012

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards across the school, particularly in mathematics, by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - using the expertise of mathematics subject leaders to improve all teachers' subject knowledge and improve their skills in planning effective mathematics lessons
  - ensuring that all teachers match individual pupils' work to their abilities, so they are stretched in their learning and make the best possible progress
  - giving pupils more opportunities to find things out for themselves.
  
- Improve the impact of the school's leaders by:
  - ensuring that the headteacher and other senior leaders have a more accurate view about what needs to be improved and have clearer plans as to how improvements will be achieved
  - ensuring that the mathematics curriculum meets the needs of pupils in all years
  - making sure that when the headteacher and other senior leaders check the quality of teaching, they identify more precisely the improvements needed and what needs to be done to bring these about.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of governance by:
  - making sure that the governing body has accurate information about improving pupils' progress and is systematic in regularly checking that improvements are happening
  - ensuring as a matter of urgency that governors receive training so that they understand what safeguarding checks need to be made when appointing new staff and what statutory records need to be kept in relation to this.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 30 April and 1 May 2013**

### **Evidence**

Her Majesty's Inspector observed six lessons led by six teachers. Five of these were joint observations with the headteacher. The inspector also made shorter visits to the Nursery and Reception classrooms. Meetings were held with the headteacher, school leaders and managers, three members of the governing body, pupils, a local authority representative and the headteacher of the partner school. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Minutes from governing body meetings and the school's monitoring records were also considered. The inspector spoke informally to a small group of parents before the start of the school day.

### **Context**

Since the November inspection, two teachers have left the school and the deputy headteacher has taken up post. An Early Years Foundation Stage leader has been appointed. Two classes are being covered by temporary teachers. One new permanent teacher has been appointed for September. The governing body is in the process of recruiting further staff for the new academic year.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Increasing numbers of pupils are making better than expected progress since the previous inspection. As a result, more pupils are working at the levels expected for their age. This change for the better is particularly evident in Years 2 and 6, where many pupils have already made the progress usually expected by the end of the academic year. Nonetheless, this positive picture is not reflected in all classes. Although Years 3 and 4 are beginning to make stronger gains in their learning, this is not rapid enough to help them overcome previous underachievement. Consequently, standards are lower than average in these year groups. Pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium are making faster progress than their peers, which means achievement gaps are narrowing. In contrast, disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs are not keeping pace with other pupils in the school.

Pupils' achievement in mathematics is becoming stronger, although there is some way to go before it matches the outcomes for reading and writing. Nevertheless, teachers expect more from pupils in mathematics lessons, so activities are becoming more purposeful, build on prior learning and are helping pupils to gain key skills and knowledge. The work in pupils' books has improved and the reliance on worksheets is firmly in the past. More-able pupils are being challenged on a daily basis as they tackle the 'blow your mind' learning goals. Some pupils have gaps in their basic skills which are hampering their progress. Too many pupils have weak handwriting skills which limit the quality and quantity of their work. Furthermore, some pupils do not have a secure grasp of simple punctuation and grammar rules. Pupils believe their

school is improving. They say they no longer 'get away with easy work'. They are relishing the extra challenge they receive and are keen to succeed.

### **The quality of teaching**

All teachers are seizing opportunities to update their teaching skills and apply whole-school teaching strategies. This is beginning to bear fruit. Teachers are using assessment information to plan activities which are better matched to pupils' needs, and time is used well so pupils have a greater chance to complete work on their own. Classrooms have been refreshed so they provide pupils with helpful learning prompts and promote independent learning.

Some teachers have a deep understanding of how pupils learn best, which means they plan activities which excite and challenge all pupils. They constantly check on pupils' progress during lessons and quickly adapt questions or activities when they realise some pupils have hit difficulties. Not all teaching matches this effective practice and, in some instances, teaching is not good enough to help pupils make the gains of which they are capable. Teachers do not always model new learning or make the goals for each lesson clear. As a result, pupils do not know what is expected by the end of each session. Some teachers have not raised their expectations high enough, which means they accept low levels of work as the best that pupils can do. As a result, teachers' praise and feedback is over generous.

Teachers are striving to follow the updated marking policy, so pupils are receiving better guidance to help them improve. However, not all teachers give pupils time to respond to comments and, in some cases, the advice teachers provide does not match pupils' age or ability.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils are friendly, courteous and well behaved. Their positive attitudes make a positive contribution to calm classrooms where learning is rarely disrupted. They continue to listen, follow instructions and work hard even when they are not excited by their learning. Pupils say behaviour is typically good and they are free from bullying. They have total confidence in staff to care for them and keep them from harm. Although they know it is wrong to use homophobic language inappropriately, they say they do hear this type of name-calling from time-to-time. Pupils continue to attend school regularly.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

Senior leaders, staff and members of the governing body were shocked at the findings from the recent inspection and not everyone agrees the judgements are a true reflection of the school. Nonetheless, the headteacher has not allowed this to get in the way of moving the school forward. Immediate action to tackle weaknesses

has laid the necessary foundations for a speedy recovery. The planned actions to bring about improvement are effective and set a clear road-map for success. Challenging timescales are being met despite significant staff changes. Senior leaders have successfully harnessed the commitment of staff and governors, so everyone is pulling together in the same direction. Change is being managed sensitively so morale is high.

Time has been used wisely. Senior leaders recognise that continuing with tried and tested strategies is not an option as this has not brought about convincing success in the past. As a result, they have returned to basics, stripping teaching strategies bare and rebuilding a whole-school understanding of the Lepton way of working.

Although relatively new to their posts, senior leaders are making a positive contribution to the school's recovery. Their roles have been clarified so they are crystal clear on what they are expected to do and how they should check the difference their work is making to teaching and pupils' achievement. As a result, they are leading staff training, holding teachers to account and keeping a close eye on pupils' progress. The mathematics subject leader is seizing the opportunity to improve this area of the school with enthusiasm and increasing confidence. Much has already been put in place to improve mathematics teaching. The curriculum has been completely reviewed and is now based on the 'big picture' of where pupils start and the skills and knowledge they need to gain as they move from class to class. A thorough and effective programme of staff training has built teachers' subject knowledge which means they are planning mathematics lessons to meet pupils' needs rather than following a published scheme.

The systems to check the quality of teaching are much stronger. A range of activities take place on a very frequent basis, led by key members of staff. Teachers receive much sharper feedback which means many are in no doubt about what they need to do to improve. There is, however, a downside to these increased checks. Some teachers have too many targets which does not help them to focus on the most crucial areas for improvement.

Members of the governing body are as keen as everyone else to improve. They are in school more often, visiting classrooms and talking to leaders about the school's progress. They have taken part in a range of training so their understanding of safeguarding and school data is stronger. They have a much better knowledge of the checks that need to be taken when appointing new staff because some governors have completed the necessary training. Governors recognise there is greater scope for them to strengthen their role in monitoring the work of the school so they can offer greater challenge to school leaders. Parents are supportive of the school and satisfied with the steps being taken to bring about improvement.

## **External support**

The local authority is delivering on all of its planned actions. Its support is spot-on because it is meeting the needs of the school and helping to increase the capacity of senior leaders and managers to bring about improvement. Links with a local partner school are being exploited which has led to improvements in school systems and increased expertise in judging the quality of teaching. Teachers are benefiting from whole-school training and individual support through opportunities to visit the partner school and work with colleagues. The subject leader for mathematics is using the link with this school as a springboard to bring about changes to mathematics teaching at Lepton.