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6 May 2013

Ms Lisa Needham  
Headteacher  
Werneth Primary School  
Coppice Street  
Oldham  
Lancashire  
OL8 4BL

Dear Ms Needham

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

After my visit to Werneth Primary School on 3 May 2013, I am writing 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 section 5 inspection in December last year.

This 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, I held meetings with you and the senior leadership team, six members of the governing body and a representative of Oldham local authority. I looked at school documents including: improvement plans; forms that senior leaders use when they observe teaching; latest data about pupils' achievement; and attendance and behaviour records.

**Context**

Since the inspection the deputy headteacher has returned to work after a period of maternity leave. You restructured the leadership of the school, appointing two assistant headteachers from within the staff and reorganising leaders roles and responsibilities. The governing body has a new member and has started considering whether to change status to become an academy. There have been changes to the building such as new fencing and a new entrance to the school.

## **Main findings**

You have taken very effective action to improve the security of the site and improve how well the staff safeguard pupils. A new fence now separates the car park to stop pupils from straying into the paths of cars or having quick access to the main road. You have introduced new procedures for entering the school including a new entrance, new badge system and a requirement for visitors to sign in before coming into the school. There has also been training to improve staff's knowledge and understanding of how to better protect pupils.

Pupils' behaviour is improving and the number of incidents of recorded behaviour incidents is reducing well. Pupils' attendance is increasing as a result of highly efficient systems to track attendance and tackle absence. The work to educate parents and carers about the importance of primary school and the importance of sending even the youngest children to school is successful.

The quality of teaching is improving. You and the senior leadership team have established a 'learning culture' in the school which is having a positive impact. Teachers work alongside each other helping to improve their teaching; they have chances to access personalised training at a local school and they respond positively and honestly to observing other colleagues. Teachers have been trained in how to improve the questions they ask pupils. Senior leaders have moved quickly since the inspection to improve the quality of targets pupils have and improve the way teachers set targets. There have also been improvements to teachers' marking. Changes to the curriculum are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement, for example pupils' work now often starts with a trip, visit, or with some sort of practical experiences.

Although there have been positive changes to the classrooms, there is still a need for more changes to reduce the noise in Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) and to give Reception pupils a better chance to go outside when they choose.

You have made an effective start in training teachers in how to lead subjects. The subject leader for English already has made some changes which have started to improve pupils' reading, writing and speaking skills.

Despite your highly effective leadership which has been the main reason why the school is improving so quickly, the school's action plans need improvement. There needs to be more involvement of governors in setting priorities for improvement and in measuring whether the actions to improve have been successful. To be able to measure success however, governors need to check the plans are clearer. Plans should have milestones which can be monitored throughout the year and there should be more challenging targets. Governance needs improvement and would benefit from an external review. Governors have spent a significant amount of time discussing conversion to be an academy and planning to recruit a permanent headteacher. They do not have enough involvement in self-evaluating the school.

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:

- improve the quality of action plans
- ask the National College for Teaching and Learning for an external review of governance [governance.review@nationalcollege.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:governance.review@nationalcollege.gsi.gov.uk)

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

### **External support**

The school is very open to external advice, support and challenge. Links you have forged with a local teaching school and National Leader in Education are having a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. The local authority also provides challenge and support for the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr

### **Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Oldham Local authority -
- The lead inspector.