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14 June 2013

Mr Mark McDermid
Headteacher
Pool-in-Wharfedale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Arthington Lane
Pool-in-Wharfedale
Otley
West Yorkshire
LS21 1LG

Dear Mr McDermid

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Pool-in-Wharfedale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Leeds

Following my visit to your school on 13 June 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 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher and the leaders of English and mathematics, a group of pupils from Year 5 and 6, representatives of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The school's improvement plans were evaluated. I also spoke with a few parents informally in the playground at the end of the school day. I reviewed a range of documents including minutes from the first meeting of the Progress Review Group and the school's most recent records from monitoring the quality of teaching.

Main findings

You and your staff are clearly committed to helping the school to improve and recognise where developments are needed. You have worked quickly to draw up a plan focusing on the main areas for improvement identified at the recent inspection and the time-line of actions is proving useful in ensuring that this work stays on track. However, given pupils' starting points, targets set for 2013 in the plan do not reflect high enough expectations for pupils' progress or their attainment by the end of Key Stage 2. Targets for the end of this key stage in 2014 are more aspirational. Subject improvement plans contain appropriate

actions but success criteria focus too heavily on implementation rather than the intended impact on pupil outcomes.

The recently established Joint Review Group (JRG), consisting of a core group of governors and chaired by the school's local authority improvement adviser, is monitoring the school's progress in tackling the areas for improvement closely. Your recent report to this group provides useful 'headline' data but, does not give sufficient detail about the progress of different groups, or whether gaps in performance, such as between boys and girls are narrowing. This limits how effectively governors can monitor the school's progress and provide challenge.

Your recent monitoring of teaching quality has identified that progress has already been made in improving the contribution of teaching assistants to supporting learning in the classroom and that teachers are focusing more clearly on ensuring pupils know what they are trying to learn. However, comments by the pupils I interviewed indicate that in other areas, such as reducing the amount of teacher talk and ensuring work is always challenging enough for all pupils, less consistent progress has been achieved. It is an improvement that you and other leaders are beginning to use a broader range of evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching over time and its impact on pupils' progress.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- attend the forthcoming 'Getting to Good' conference in Leeds
- apply to attend the 'Better Mathematics' conference in Manchester on 5 July 2013
- ensure targets for pupils in all year groups are based on high expectations for pupils' attainment and progress and that teachers' planning and lesson delivery provides sufficient challenge to enable pupils to make at least good progress over time
- ensure the checking of pupils' progress looks closely at the performance of different groups and that the proportion of pupils on track to make 'expected' and 'better than expected' progress is closely monitored to identify potential underachievement
- sustain the urgency and focus on improving teaching and pupils' progress to make sure the school remains on track to be judged 'good' at its next section 5 inspection.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

Your work with the Local Leader of Education (LLE) and their school, funded by the local authority, is proving to be a valuable resource for developing key aspects of the school's work. The opportunity for colleagues to observe and reflect on this external good and outstanding practice, and the joint working with their staff on areas such as marking, are inspiring colleagues and helping to improve teaching quality. The expertise of the LLE is also helping to extend the knowledge and skills of leaders. The increased level of local authority improvement adviser time is ensuring that you, other leaders and governors are more sharply focused on tackling the school's most urgent priorities.

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

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli
Her Majesty's Inspector