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1 July 2013

Miss J Sargent  
Headteacher  
Almondbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant and Nursery School  
Longcroft  
Almondbury  
Huddersfield  
West Yorkshire  
HD5 8XW

Dear Miss Sargent

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Almondbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant and Nursery School, Kirklees**

Following my visit to your school on 28 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 April 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, pupils, seven members of the Governing Body and two representatives of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated and I scrutinised a number of documents. I visited lessons and looked at pupils' books with you.

**Context**

Since the inspection, there have been no changes to staffing. There will be significant changes in September. The school has three vacancies to fill, one of which is a more senior position. A maths subject leader has been appointed into Key Stage 1. However, the school is struggling to appoint a leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The local authority is supporting this by offering a secondment opportunity. The other teaching vacancy has been advertised and the governing body is confident it will appoint before the end of term. The school has a new local authority Total Improvement Quality Officer.

## **Main findings**

The school's post inspection development plan is focused on short term actions with a strategic long term overview. Senior leaders are mindful of the significant staffing change for September and have taken account of this when prioritising actions. Supported by a National Leader in Education, they have developed and improved the systems and procedures needed to drive forward improvements in teaching and learning.

Actions include, improving and increasing the range of checks on teaching and learning and pupil progress. This is already giving senior leaders a more accurate picture of standards. It is being used to make staff accountable for the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils. A new planning format, trialled by the deputy headteacher, is providing consistency in teaching and learning. Tracking and target setting systems have been reviewed. This is leading to the setting of more challenging targets for key stage one pupils. Pupils have been consulted on the development of an assessment, marking and reporting policy. Pupils say they know how important this is to their learning and progress. They say it will help them to know 'how to do better'.

The action plan needs to be sharper. It requires specific milestones for the completion of actions. It needs to state when, and by how much, teaching and achievement will improve. It should be evaluated using the data available to demonstrate impact. This will enable governors to challenge the school to further improve its progress.

Governors are clear about what needs to be done and are committed to raising standards. They have been involved in developing the post Ofsted action plan and will participate in planned monitoring activities. They need more guidance on how and when to do this. The local authority has not undertaken a review of the governing body. It is due to do this at the start of the autumn term.

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:

- ensure the staff appointed have the knowledge and skills necessary to lead and manage learning
- rewrite the action plan to ensure it is sharper, as detailed above
- ensure governors have the knowledge and skills to undertake the necessary checks to challenge and hold leaders to account.

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**

The school is making effective use of the external support provided by the local authority and National Leader in Education. This is assisting leaders to develop the systems and procedures needed to drive forward improvements. Senior leaders have agreed to attend an Ofsted, 'Getting to Good Seminar' and a key stage one workshop, led by HMI.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Bowyer

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Director of Education Wakefield Diocesan Board of Education
- Mrs Helen Storey- Senior HMI
- The lead inspector