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18 July 2013

Mrs Julia Collins  
Headteacher  
Harrogate, St Peter's Church of England Primary School  
Belford Road  
Harrogate  
North Yorkshire  
HG1 1JA

Dear Mrs Collins

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Harrogate, St Peter's Church of England Primary School, North Yorkshire**

Following my visit with Gina White Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 17 July 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 May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and your deputy headteacher, three members of the governing body and a group of pupils. In addition, a telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. A range of documentation was evaluated including the school and local authority support plans and a sample of monitoring records. I undertook a brief tour of the school accompanied by the headteacher and a school leader with responsibility for inclusion.

**Context**

A teaching assistant in the Year 3/4 class has been appointed since the section 5 inspection.

## **Main findings**

Since the inspection you and some members of staff have undertaken initial planning to address the areas for improvement identified in the recent inspection report. This has included some analysis of pupil progress data by your deputy headteacher. Training has also begun with the intention of developing teachers' understanding of the importance of progress data. There has also been some monitoring of pupils' books, some joint lesson observations with the local authority adviser and re-setting pupils in year 3 and 4 classes.

The approach to evaluating the quality and impact of teaching over time requires urgent review, so that this work has greater influence on driving improvement in the classroom. At the moment, feedback to teachers does not give enough consideration to the impact of their work on pupils' progress in learning over time or to the quality of work in pupils' books. This means that some staff have an over generous view of the overall quality of teaching and do not make the link closely enough between the impact of teaching and the decline in achievement over time.

You and your deputy have developed an action plan with the intention that this will guide the school to becoming good within the next 18-24 months. While the plan does cover some of the broad issues mentioned in the recent inspection report, it is not as helpful as it could be as a tool to drive school improvement. The plan lacks clarity about how and when teaching will improve, or the impact that this will have on pupils' progress over time. Insufficient focus is placed upon how the plan will be monitored and evaluated throughout the period leading up to the next inspection. Also the responsibilities and expectations of some staff with management roles are not made clear enough for them, or for the managers who hold them to account.

The governors have an overview of what some of the key areas are that need to be improved and are very supportive of you and the school. However, they are still not effectively challenging the school on why progress is not fast enough. A better understanding of school performance data would help the governing body to carry out this important aspect of its role.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement.

The school should take immediate action to:

- revise the improvement plan so that it is more helpful in assisting school leaders to check the implementation and measure the impact of agreed actions
- ensure that when evaluating teaching and learning greater attention is given to the key areas for improvement identified in the inspection report and greater emphasis is given to pupils' progress over time.

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 local authority have regularly visited the school and rightly identified areas of the school's performance that require improvement. However, the local authority has not been challenging enough in ensuring that school improvement planning is a strong feature of the school's approach to getting to good. The local authority shares with the school an over generous view of the quality of teaching and learning, and so, there has not been enough challenge to school leaders to improve provision. Training and support for governors have not happened quickly enough to help them play a more effective role in analysing school performance data and questioning school leaders about their findings.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Smith

## **Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Diocese