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Mr Chris Brooksbank
Headteacher
Flookburgh CofE Primary School
Winder Lane
Flookburgh
Grange-Over-Sands
Cumbria
LA11 7LE

Dear Mr Brooksbank

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Flookburgh CofE Primary School, Cumbria

Following my visit to your school on 15 October 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 July. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

- add the management of pupils' behaviour to the key priorities in the action plan and ensure that staff act on the guidance resulting from the impending review by specialists from the local authority
- use evidence from the evaluation of the quality of teaching, including the teaching of the headteacher, to agree 'non-negotiables' in teaching and learning, and to sharpen the action plan by identifying the proportions of expected good and outstanding teaching at key milestones
- take steps to plug any gaps in the provision for the teaching of reading
- carry out an audit with all staff of the skills that typify effective leadership and management to ensure all are aware of their responsibilities in driving improvement and to identify individual and collective needs for training and support.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, a governor and the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated along with performance data from 2013.

Context

Since the inspection in July there have been changes in staffing and the organisation of classes. Several pupils in differing age groups have left the school. The former Early Years Foundation Stage leader has moved to a promoted post in another school. A teacher has been appointed to take the part-time Nursery class and the senior teacher now teaches the Reception children. A recently qualified teacher is teaching the class of mixed Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. You have increased your teaching commitment and, as well as sharing the teaching of a class of pupils in Years 3 and 4 with a part-time teacher, are taking other classes for some sessions.

Main findings

You, the staff and governors have accepted the findings of the Section 5 inspection in July and are building on the work started in 2012/13 to improve the provision and raise expectations of what pupils can achieve. The school's results in the Year 6 national tests were higher than in 2012. However, the results in reading raise concern. Not all pupils made the progress they should at Key Stage 2 and some have moved into secondary school lacking the reading skills expected for their age. Your analysis of the data regarding pupils' progress has given a clear baseline of current and expected attainment. Staff are now aware of what counts nationally as expected progress for pupils and you have set clear targets for pupils' progress which are rightly linked to targets for teachers' performance.

You have worked with the local authority to compile a suitable action plan and a calendar of actions. The plan covers all aspects of the two areas for improvement identified in the Section 5 inspection report as well as some secondary aspects identified by the school, including behaviour management. This must become a main priority because the challenging behaviour of a few pupils is now a barrier to improvement; it is undermining staff's confidence and affecting the learning of other pupils. The plan has two review dates for this term but lacks clear milestones with expected outcomes, especially in relation to the profile of teaching, to tie in with these reviews. Given that you teach part-time, it is essential that your own teaching is evaluated to enable the identification of common strengths and areas for whole school attention alongside individual programmes of professional development. A walk round the school showed there is some clutter and poor organisation of resources and space. There is considerable scope to lift the quality of the learning environment to reflect current topics and to celebrate achievement.

In this small school, all teachers are taking on aspects of leadership but most staff are relatively inexperienced and unsure of what is expected of them. It is timely to conduct an audit of skills to support the planning of development experiences, including visits to other schools for you and all staff to see effective practice in driving improvement.

Governance has tightened. The governing body has sought and acted on advice. It is now more aware of how to hold the school to full account; good steps are the decisions to hold more frequent meetings to review the school's progress, to link individual governors with

classes and to make some governors responsible for seeing how well new ways are working, such as the revisions to the marking of pupils' work. Governors' heightened responsibility was also evident in the meeting to inform parents of the implications of the school's situation with a recent follow-up session to outline the planned action.

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 has been giving the school significant support for some time with recent guidance in compiling the action plan and in strengthening governance. You have recently observed teaching jointly with the school's development officer. He is well aware of the issues facing the school and has initiated action, drawing on specialist expertise within the authority. The impending two-day review of pupils' behaviour and how it is managed is highly apposite. The school is also benefiting from guidance from others within the local schools' partnership and there is the potential for further brokered support by a Local Leader in Education. The local authority intends to sustain high involvement and its regular review of the school's progress and effectiveness.

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

Yours sincerely

Sonja Øyen

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Diocese - for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools