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14 October 2013

Ms Jane Plummer  
Headteacher  
Burneston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School  
Burneston  
Bedale  
North Yorkshire  
DL8 2HX

Dear Ms Plummer

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Burneston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, North Yorkshire**

Following my visit to your school on 11 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 2013. 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:

- improve the quality of its action plan to make clear the measures of success and how these will directly impact on pupils' progress
- make sure that planning makes clear who is responsible for checking that actions have taken place against precise timescales and who is responsible for evaluating impact.

The local authority are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and their plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The local authority should take immediate action to:

- broker a partnership between Burneston and a good or outstanding school where achievement and teaching have a stronger profile
- support the school in revising the school development plan to address the areas for improvement highlighted in this letter.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, eight pupils, two teachers and three governors. I also met with your Educational Development Adviser who is an officer of a local authority. Together we undertook a brief tour of the school and visited some lessons. I also evaluated the school development plan and other monitoring evidence including performance management targets and lesson observation documents. The single central register was also reviewed.

## **Context**

Two new teachers have been appointed since the s5 inspection, one in Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1, and another to teach in Years 2 and 3.

## **Main findings**

Since the inspection in July you and senior leaders have galvanised staff. You have wasted no time in stressing the urgency to improve and take rapid action to become a good school within the next 18 to 24 months. You have sharply focused on improving the quality and consistency of teaching across the school. A growing strength is the quality of monitoring that is taking place. There are now clear and increasingly challenging targets set for both staff and pupils. Focused and regular learning walks and lesson observations are now taking place to help you measure the rates of improvement against those areas for improvement raised in the recent inspection.

Staff and governors all accept that this is not yet a good school but recognise it is an improving one. You have successfully started to raise levels of expectation about what could and should be deemed good practice in terms of teaching, marking and feedback to pupils. Staff are finding these clearer expectations helpful in supporting them to improve their own teaching. Some pupils have also noticed the improvements that have started to be made in terms of more detailed and useful marking and feedback.

You have closely linked performance management targets and continuing professional development to the areas for improvement from the inspection. Clear links have been made between pupil progress and salary progression. The intention is to eradicate weaker teaching quickly and increase the proportion that is good or better.

Governors feel that their role is continuing to develop well. Due to recent training on the use of school data, governors are now more confident to ask the critical questions about school performance. This increased level of confidence and challenge has been welcomed by the headteacher.

The school development plan does address each of the areas for improvement from the recent inspection. However, to increase the potential of the plan to support rapid improvement it should include clearer timescales for when actions will happen over the next 18 to 24 months, measures of success that can be easily judged and greater clarity around who is responsible for checking the impact of actions.

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 headteacher has valued the support given by the Educational Development Adviser. However, since the time of the inspection the local authority has not acted with the same level of urgency. It has not provided effective support in ensuring that the school development plan is as tightly focused as it needs to be, despite a local authority led school review highlighting issues with a previous school plan in April 2013. The local authority has not used its intelligence of good or outstanding schools well enough to develop effective and meaningful partnerships to support the school in tackling the areas for improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Smith

**Her Majesty's Inspector**