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16 October 2013

Mrs Nicola Walker  
Headteacher  
Gisburn Road Community Primary School  
Gisburn Road  
Barnoldswick  
Lancashire  
BB18 5JX

Dear Mrs Walker

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Gisburn Road Community Primary School, Lancashire**

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 June 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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 school improvement and subject action plans so that they:
  - cover all the areas for improvement identified in the most recent section 5 inspection report
  - include quantifiable targets for each area and precise timescales for their implementation.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders, members of the Governing Body, representatives of the local authority and a group of Year 6 pupils, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also evaluated the school improvement plan and subject action plans and scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and outcomes of monitoring visits.

## Context

Since the section 5 inspection, one member of staff has retired and been replaced by a new member of staff.

## Main findings

You have a clear determination to bring about necessary improvements to the school and continue to work very hard to ensure that it becomes good. You are rightly making considerable efforts to involve your senior leaders and other staff in the decisions about how to bring about improvement. However, the pace of change needs to be accelerated.

The school improvement plan does not cover all the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report. It does not give a consistently clear enough indication of what you are aiming to do, when you are going to do it and how you will know whether or not you have been successful. For example, reference is made to 'the percentage of age-related expectations increasing'. But there are no figures to show how much greater that percentage will be and no timescales for achieving that goal. These weaknesses are even more evident in the subject action plans appended to the main plan. There is a need to revise these plans in order give greater coherence and direction to the actions that you are currently taking.

Since the inspection, the school has introduced a more rigorous and regular system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and has established individual action plans to help staff make specific improvements to their work. As a result, you estimate that 25% of the teaching is now good or better and none of it is inadequate. However, there is still some way to go to ensure that 50% of teaching is good or better by December 2013, which is one of the school's interim targets.

Teachers have received some training on ensuring that tasks are set at the correct level for pupils. However, analysis of lesson observations shows that this is an area where staff need further support if pupils are to be helped to make as much progress as possible.

The school has identified a handwriting scheme that it wishes to introduce. This has not yet happened. However, pupils reported that teachers were now demanding higher standards of presentation and providing more support with correcting errors of spelling and punctuation. It is unclear how the school intends to provide pupils with more opportunities to apply their number skills to solving problems. Although this was identified as an area for improvement in the last inspection report, there is no reference to it in the school improvement plan or the mathematics action plan.

A considerable investment has been made in improving the physical appearance of the school buildings and in making better use of space. Children report that the alternative provision in the Oasis room has led to better behaviour and fewer disruptions in the classroom. A start has been made on improving the outdoor provision for children in Reception. However, the funding for further work has not yet been secured.

The children whom I met were very enthusiastic about the additional support they were receiving to increase their rate of progress. Documentation showed that the intervention programmes are beginning to have a positive effect.

Since the inspection, the governors have been helped to gain a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities and begun to make more frequent visits to the school. They have also drawn up plans for a new governance structure. However, they have yet to receive the detailed training in analysing data which will be essential if they are to hold the school to account and ensure that pupils achieve the standards that they should.

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 commissioned the local authority to conduct an audit of the governing body, and an independent company to assist with governor development. Representatives of the local authority have also attended the Standards and Effectiveness Committee of the Governing Body. This support has enabled the governors to gain an improved understanding of their roles and a greater sense of direction and ambition for the school.

The teaching and learning audit conducted by the local authority contributed to the decision to re-assign teaching roles, in order to make best use of teachers' skills. The impact of this was reflected in the positive responses of the children to the additional help they were receiving in specific aspects of their work.

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

Yours sincerely

Aelwyn Pugh

**Her Majesty's Inspector**