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17 October 2013

Mr Aspin  
Headteacher  
Rawtenstall Newchurch Church of England Primary School  
Dark Lane  
Newchurch  
Rossendale  
Lancashire  
BB4 7UA

Dear Mr Aspin

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Rawtenstall Newchurch Church of England Primary School, Lancashire**

Following my visit to your school on 16 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:

- drive improvements in mathematics with more urgency
- develop the role of subject leaders to ensure they have more impact on improvement.

**Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you, the two teachers leading on literacy and mathematics, six pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6, the Chair and Vice-Chair and another member of the Governing Body and two representatives of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan; the school's tracking of pupil progress; the school's monitoring and evaluation schedule, including a lesson observation form; minutes of the governing body; the new teaching and learning and marking and feedback policies.

## **Context**

The previous headteacher, at the time of the last inspection, has resigned. You have been appointed as temporary Executive Head of the school, for at least the next twelve months, at the request of the governing body. This decision is appropriate to maintain the strong leadership you introduced to the school as an Associate Head last term. A special needs coordinator has been appointed to make sure the provision meets the needs of all pupils needing extra support.

## **Main findings**

You, the governors and staff are determined to ensure the school is good. The development plan focuses clearly on the areas for improvement identified in the recent inspection. You have a clear sequence of priorities and have concentrated on getting an accurate view of the quality of teaching in the school. You have conducted fourteen lesson observations this term and have an accurate view of where support is needed to improve teaching to good and better. Positive links with your partner school mean that staff are sharing good practice and benefitting from clear direction. Agreed lesson plans for literacy and mathematics have made sure staff plan more effectively so lessons concentrate on pupils' learning rather than the completion of tasks. Lesson observations, teachers' plans and evidence of the pupils' work are used effectively to advise teachers where the quality of their teaching can improve. Weekly training on teaching and learning is having a positive impact on the consistency of expectations and the quality of teaching is improving.

Swift action was taken to reorganise the school day and adjust classes to make better use of time and enable all pupils to make progress. The creative curriculum and increased physical education has broadened and enriched the curriculum, however, the impact of these changes on pupils' progress has yet to be seen. As a result you plan to develop the role of subject leadership within the school to create a culture of high expectation. A new marking and feedback policy is in place so pupils are given regular, consistent and better quality feedback on the strengths and weaknesses in their work. Pupils showed me evidence of work they had corrected themselves and talked about a recent emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar which they are enjoying. A clear tracking system has been introduced so teachers are better aware of pupils' assessment data to show attainment and progress. An innovative method of teaching is being introduced to improve creative writing skills and punctuation and the impact of this should be seen next term. You have observed some evidence of pupils applying mathematical skills in more practical and interesting activities but this is not secure across the school and remains an area for development.

Recent changes to the governing body have had a positive impact. There is a good level of challenge evident in the minutes of the most recent meeting and governors are well aware of your priorities. They appreciate the quality of information you provide about the school and are aware that the leadership of the school needs to be devolved more widely to encourage rapid progress.

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**

You, your staff and governors have received good support from the local authority prior to the last inspection and this has continued regarding the focus on leadership. The local authority representatives have confidence in the governing body to improve the school due to the increasing challenge they have witnessed by the governors. Your links with other schools and as a local leader of education are valued by the local authority and the school. Time to embed the changes and see the impact of your action plan is needed. The local authority has confidence in the direction and sense of purpose with which you are driving change within the school. The impact of the support is beginning to be seen through the improvement in the quality of teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Christina McIntosh

**Her Majesty's Inspector**