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Gary Gentle
Headteacher
Bilston Church of England Primary School
Albany Crescent
WV14 0HU

Dear Mr Gentle

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bilston Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 26 November 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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:

- increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching
- ensure that those governors who are linked to the key areas for improvement establish robust systems for checking that actions identified in the school improvement plan are helping to raise pupils' achievement

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met with the National Leader of Education (NLE) and the deputy headteacher from the Manor Primary school, your partner teaching school. A range of documentation was reviewed, including information about pupils' achievement and feedback to teachers following lesson observations. During this

visit you joined me on short visits to lessons to review pupils' work and to talk to pupils about their learning. The school's improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

Since the inspection, one teacher has resigned. Two new teachers have joined the school. The school is expanding. There are additional classes in Year 1 and in Year Reception.

Main findings

You are responding to the issues identified in the recent inspection with urgency. You have established an effective partnership with the Manor Primary School. You are acting upon the advice of the National Leader of Education from your partner school and the local authority adviser. The school improvement plan identifies suitable actions to improve the quality of teaching and the work of senior leaders. Appropriate timescales and milestones are identified.

Middle leaders are receiving a good level of support from senior leaders and are benefiting from training and support provided by staff at the Manor Primary School. As a result, they have a clear overview of the quality of teaching across the school and the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement. Training programmes have been organised to help teachers with specific aspects of their teaching. You have focused on improving teachers' questioning techniques in order to stretch more-able pupils. Exchange visits have taken place to help teachers to learn from outstanding practice at the Manor Primary School. Your records show that you have judged increasing proportions of teaching to be good and none inadequate. Teachers are clear about what is expected and how they will be held accountable for pupils' achievement.

You and other senior leaders have organised training for staff to improve the teaching of spelling and handwriting. Your records show that this is beginning to have an impact on standards in writing. Your recent checks on pupils' achievement show that more pupils are working at the standards expected of them in writing. However, this is inconsistent in Years 3 and 5. You have responded quickly to this information and have made changes to teaching groups and additional support sessions. It is too early to see the impact of this.

Your systems for monitoring the quality of teaching over time have been refined to include a range of evidence of teachers' performance. Following lesson observations, your written feedback to teachers identifies successful practice and where further improvements are required. When weaknesses are identified, you work effectively with staff from the Manor Primary School to make arrangements for teachers to receive targeted support and coaching.

Governors are committed to supporting the school. They have good systems and protocols for visiting lessons and talking to pupils. They are beginning to check that

the actions in the school improvement plan are helping to raise pupils' achievement. However, although specific governors are linked to the areas for improvement, they have not yet established a robust system for checking the impact of actions taken. 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

Through the local authority partnership meetings and the regular visits from the local authority adviser you receive an appropriate level of support and challenge. The local authority has brokered the effective link with the Manor Primary School. The local authority adviser has helped you to focus on the main areas of weakness and take suitable action. Teachers and other leaders have also benefited from the training and support provided by staff from the teaching school.

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

Yours sincerely

Marilyn Mottram
Her Majesty's Inspector