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Mr T Burns
Acting Headteacher
Lepton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior, Infant and Nursery School
Station Road
Lepton
Huddersfield
West Yorkshire
HD8 0DE

Dear Mr Burns

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lepton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior, Infant and Nursery School, Kirklees

Following my visit to your school on 11 December 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 October 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:

- strengthen the monitoring of teaching with a clearer focus on how effectively pupils learn and make progress in lessons.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher, governors, a group of pupils, senior teachers and a representative of the local authority. In addition, the inspector also met with a national leader of education who is supporting the leadership of the school. A range of documentation was evaluated including: the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress and records of lesson observations. A tour of the school to look briefly at teaching and learning was also conducted.

Context

Since the previous inspection in October, the headteacher has remained on long-term absence. The deputy headteacher has been appointed to acting headteacher and the assistant headteacher has taken over the role of acting deputy headteacher. Three new teachers joined the school at the beginning of September and one member of staff has returned from a period of absence. The governing body has been strengthened with some new appointments.

Main findings

The school has move forward well since the previous inspection. Current leaders have taken a range of appropriate measures to improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress. Staff are stepping up to the mark, expectations have been raised, roles and responsibilities have been clarified and teamwork is strong. As a consequence, the pace of change has quickened, significant steps to prioritise actions have been taken and there is a strong momentum for improving the school.

The school improvement plan has been strengthened and follows closely the areas for further improvement identified in the inspection in October. Planned actions are clear and are underpinned by milestones and success criteria against which the impact of actions can be systematically monitored and evaluated. This is providing governors with useful information to inform them of how successfully the school is improving over-time.

Systems to advance the quality of pupils' learning are gathering pace and have benefitted from changes to the school's timetable and improvements to teachers' planning and marking. Planned action to pin-point the aspects of teaching that require improvement is also taking shape. Leaders have correctly recognised that the next step is to agree some key principles of what makes effective learning for pupils in all lessons.

Senior leaders have tightened their procedures for checking on the quality of teaching and learning. However, further improvements are required in how leaders make judgements on the achievement of pupils and groups of pupils in lessons.

Governance has become sharper-edged. The actions of governors following the previous inspection are demonstrating a clear understanding of the school's most pressing priorities and a resolve to challenge senior leaders and hold them to account. The next step for governors is to develop their own techniques to monitor the work of the school independently from senior leaders.

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 support from the local authority has been well targeted and effective. The guidance provided by the national leader of education is helping to improve the quality of pupils' learning and strengthen the skills of leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood

Her Majesty's Inspector