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Mrs Tracy Heys
Headteacher
Burnley St James' Lanehead Church of England Primary School
Briercliffe Road
Burnley
Lancashire
BB10 2NH

Dear Mrs Heys

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Burnley St James' Lanehead Church of England Primary School, Lancashire

Following my visit to your school on 4 February 2014, 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 November 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:

- ensure that the progress pupils are expected to make is always identified precisely when planning for learning and setting targets
- increase the rate of improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- ensure that the support and challenge provided by governors further improves through good attendance at meetings, active involvement in the life of the school and carefully planned work with leaders.

Evidence

Meetings were held with you, subject leaders for literacy and numeracy, pupils, a group of governors and a representative of the local authority. The school's action plan and other documents were evaluated. Samples of work from pupils in Years 2, 5 and 6 were reviewed. Classrooms were visited and pupils' play at lunchtime observed.

Context

A teacher has returned following a long term absence. A foundation governor has resigned and a new appointment put in place. A National Leader of Governance has been appointed as an associate governor.

Main findings

Teaching is improving. Teachers are planning more effectively. An additional teacher is working with Year 6 so that smaller classes for literacy and numeracy give pupils more individual attention. Extra lessons for some groups of pupils in Year 6 are helping them to do better. The way literacy is taught has been changed to ensure that tasks help pupils of all abilities to learn quickly. A new mathematics scheme is providing a clearer framework for teaching. Teachers are adjusting the scheme to meet pupils' needs. Problem solving in mathematics has a higher priority, for example, it was a key part of the 'Big maths morning' on the day of this visit. Pupils worked hard at the challenges they were set and were keen to talk about their learning. Opportunities to extend problem solving to 'real life' situations are not always taken.

Marking is inconsistent. Its quality varies between teachers and subjects. Teachers' comments outside literacy and numeracy do not provide enough challenge to pupils. In addition, marking does not always encourage pupils to think about their work and pupils' responses are sometimes not checked. While pupils have 'Fix it' time to improve their work, this is not used effectively in all classes.

Improvement in the Reception and Year 1 is at an early stage, opportunities to enhance children's development of literacy and numeracy skills are missed. Support from a local authority consultant is starting to improve teaching. Teachers have improved the organisation of Early Years classrooms and outside area. This has supported faster learning.

Teachers have started to observe the most effective teaching in the school as part of a rolling programme. These observations are used as part of planned support to improve teachers' skills.

Leaders and governors responded rapidly to the inspection. The school improvement plan has been sharpened. Clear actions and tight timescales are specified. While the revised plan does not go beyond February, leaders intend to use their own evaluation and information gained from training activities to ensure that further planning is effective. Targets set for the achievement of pupils overall risk hiding underachievement because they do not identify the progress individual pupils are expected to make precisely enough. Teachers' short term planning is now reviewed regularly by the headteacher to ensure that it is effective.

Governors have started to provide effective support and challenge to leaders. Governors have recognised that variable attendance at meetings reduced their effectiveness. The number of committees has been reduced and the expectation that governors will attend raised. Governors with relevant experience are being appointed to monitor different aspects of the school. However, the induction of governors to these roles is not always fully systematic. A National Leader of Governance has recently been appointed as an associate governor to provide support and advice to the Chair of Governors. An external review of governance has recently been completed. This identified a number of appropriate

improvement actions. Governors have not yet considered how these should be linked to their existing plans to ensure there is further rapid improvement.

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 local authority works effectively with the school. The link adviser is providing a good balance of challenge and support. She has additional time allocated to allow her to do this. The local authority has arranged for teachers to take part in training and development programmes which aim to improve teaching, support the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage and raise the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Links have been established with local schools to support leaders' development.

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

Yours sincerely

David Selby

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority - including where the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- < Diocese - for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk] - for academies