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Ms Gretl Young
Headteacher
Hebden Royd CofE VA Primary School
Church Lane
Hebden Bridge
West Yorkshire
HX7 6DS

Dear Ms Young

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hebden Royd CofE VA Primary School, Calderdale

Following my visit to your school on 3 February 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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:

- make sure the school improvement plan clearly specifies the actions required and how governors will judge whether the school is improving over-time
- ensure that feedback to teachers focuses more clearly on the achievement of pupils and groups of pupils in lessons.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with headteacher and senior leaders, a group of pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority. The inspector evaluated a range of documentation including: the school improvement plan; the tracking of pupils' progress; monitoring reports and records of lesson observations. In addition,

the headteacher took the HMI on a tour of the school to look briefly at teaching and learning and the changes made to provision since the inspection.

Context

There have been no major changes to the school's staffing and organisation since the previous inspection.

Main findings

Despite some initial disappointment with the judgement of requiring improvement, senior leaders and governors have responded with suitable urgency and have taken immediate action to tighten procedures and strengthen the quality of teaching. The increased emphasis on pupils' learning and the key elements of high quality provision has enabled staff to be more reflective about their own practice and to understand where improvements can be made. For example: the planning of lessons is sharper with a clearer focus on matching activities more closely to individual pupils' needs and the range of practical activities in numeracy lessons has increased.

Systems to check more effectively on teaching and learning are gathering pace. Mathematics lessons are observed more frequently and there is greater attention given to scrutinising the quality of pupils' work in their books. The information gained from these activities is being put to better use. This means that the school is in a stronger position to judge how well pupils are achieving and plan appropriate intervention. However, further improvements are required in how senior leaders make judgements on the achievement of pupils and groups in lessons and in measuring with precision the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.

The school improvement plan addresses most of the main areas that need improvement and is suitably underpinned by a separate plan linked to improving numeracy. The headteacher has secured the active involvement of staff, governors and the local authority in planning and overseeing actions. Nevertheless, some of the planning is imprecise: some of the actions required are understated and do not have clear milestones or success criteria against which the impact of actions can be systematically monitored and evaluated. This makes it difficult for governors to pinpoint with accuracy how well the school is improving over-time.

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 guidance and advice provided by the local authority is well targeted and effective. Regular meetings are held with the school to challenge the school's leaders to improve the quality of provision and to check that actions taken are having the

desired effect. The range and quality of the support provided to the school is helping to improve the quality of teaching and strengthen leadership.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood

Her Majesty's Inspector