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6 February 2014

Mrs D Bedford  
Headteacher  
Tadcaster East Community Primary School  
Grange Avenue  
Tadcaster  
North Yorkshire  
LS24 8AN

Dear Mrs Bedford

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Tadcaster East Community Primary School, North Yorkshire**

Following my visit to your school on 5 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 third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 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 governors understanding of how they can challenge effectively in order to drive school improvement.

### **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 action taken since the last inspection. The work of the school was evaluated, a range of documentation was scrutinised including school planning, achievement data, pupils' books and monitoring records. Three lessons were observed with the headteacher.

## **Main findings**

The school is more purposefully and demonstrably tackling the areas for improvement from the last monitoring visit. The quality of teaching is improving, attendance is rising and pupils are starting to make faster progress in mathematics and in writing.

A greater focus on termly tests and tasks to check pupils' attainment and progress has been introduced and teachers are beginning to use the data to inform their teaching. A common approach to planning that makes clear the purpose of learning and expected outcomes for different groups of pupils is applied consistently in all lessons and used well. Grouping pupils by ability, additional support and better use of resources is helping to re-energise the teaching of mathematics. Pupils now know what they are expected to learn in the sharply focused tasks and activities taking place in lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants regular checks during lessons helps pupils to understand more and deepens their learning. Pupils work this term shows more secure progress in writing and mathematics.

More regular checks on lessons, scrutiny of books and discussions with pupils are helping leaders to keep a close eye on the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. As a result they are beginning to identify issues and change practice. For example, weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and confidence in using mathematical language are being tackled through a greater focus on word problems and more exemplification and opportunities to practice these skills in lessons. Explicit guidance and feedback to staff is given explaining where further improvements are needed. Staff are responding to focused programmes of support and their teaching is improving. Barriers to developing leadership throughout the school are starting to be overcome. More staff are becoming involved in the monitoring of teaching and its impact on learning across the curriculum. This provides further opportunity to develop and share best practice.

Governors are starting to probe the performance of groups of pupils and data and information in the revised, 'Progress Tracking Report', is helping them to do this. In addition, visits are starting to take place as individual governors link to classes and to aspects of the school's work in order to see for themselves the changes that are taking place. During this inspection, you identified ways that you might develop your 'Headteacher Report' to provide examples to explain to governors the impact that good teaching is having on pupils' progress. Minutes of meetings show that the governing body is becoming more purposeful in their use of questioning of senior leaders to check on the school's effectiveness. In discussions during this inspection, governors were not always clear about the different ways that they could exercise their responsibilities to challenge and hold leaders to account.

## **External support**

Regular support from local authority school improvement officers, and the coaching support from partner schools, has contributed to improvements in the performance

of individual teachers. The need for intensive involvement has reduced. However, additional support is needed to strengthen governance in line with the further actions identified in this monitoring letter. Senior leaders are developing greater confidence and capacity in leading change and are beginning to share their experiences in developing teaching and learning with other local schools. Tadcaster East Community Primary School is becoming more outward looking, and has recently joined a local improvement network; an alliance of 17 North Yorkshire schools working in partnership with the local authority.

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

Yours sincerely

Gina White

**Her Majesty's Inspector**