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Mrs Lynne Burnley
Headteacher
St Hugh's CofE Primary School
Wildmoor Avenue
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Lancashire
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Dear Mrs Burnley

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Hugh's CofE Primary School, Oldham

Following my visit to the school on 7 March 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 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.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you, senior leaders and with five members of the governing body to discuss the action plan and actions that have taken place since the inspection. I met with two representatives from the local authority to discuss the impact of their support. I toured the school to have a look at learning in each class.

Context

A newly-qualified teacher left at the end of the Christmas term and a different newly-qualified teacher was appointed to take her place.

Main findings

Following the inspection, the teacher in charge of leading English continued to make improvements to how writing is taught. As a result, early evidence suggests pupils are writing in greater volume and for longer periods of time. A greater proportion of pupils are on track to meet expectations for their age particularly in Reception and Year 2.

School leaders have implemented the handwriting and presentation policy. They have raised expectations for teachers' own handwriting in lessons as well as for pupils and they frequently monitor the quality of both to check handwriting is improving. As a result there are striking examples of improvement in pupils' presentation. The school's evidence of impact also suggests pupils have greater pride in their work.

The teacher in charge of leading mathematics has continued to lead improvements to teaching. Teachers focus on how to speed up pupils' progress in the different strands of mathematics such as addition. They also focus on giving pupils exercises to improve their recall of calculations such as times table facts. The school's evidence shows this approach is improving pupils' recall of number facts and their progress in mathematics.

Teachers have continued to emphasise achievement across the curriculum. During my visit I observed superb brass instrument playing by one class and some deft ballet moves from pupils in Year 1.

Senior leaders have taken action to improve the quality of teaching. They have identified the support and training each teacher needs to improve. This involves a mix of coaching by expert teachers; attending training courses; observing other teachers to identify good aspects to bring to their own teaching; and teaching lessons with another teacher. The school's evidence indicates that teaching is improving.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose and is under frequent review. It changes often as a result of senior leaders' findings from checks they make to teaching and to pupils' progress. As a result, the action the school is taking is bringing about improvements.

The governing body is in the middle of an external review. The local authority has assessed each governor's skills and has provided training in how to interpret the school's data about pupils' achievement. As a result governors said they feel better placed to challenge and support the school.

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

In addition to good support to the governing body the local authority has worked effectively with the school on its action plan. It has brokered support from other schools to improve teaching and has worked effectively with staff to raise their self-confidence after a disappointing and devastating inspection judgement. As a result, teacher morale has improved and there is a focussed determination to be judged good as quickly as possible in the next inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector