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14 March 2014

Mrs Helen Malt  
Headteacher  
St Paul's CofE Primary School  
St Paul's Avenue  
Buttershaw  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire  
BD6 1ST

Dear Mrs Malt

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Paul's CofE Primary School, Bradford**

Following my visit to your school on 13 March 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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.

Thank you for the information you sent prior to me my visit which ensured best use could be made of our time during the monitoring inspection.

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, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, the Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. We looked at the latest pupil progress information and performance management information. We visited lessons, spoke with pupils, looked at pupils' work and displays.

## Context

In January, the acting headteacher was appointed as permanent headteacher. The Year 6 and Year 1 teachers have left and have been replaced by a temporary member of staff and a member of staff returning from long term sick leave. The Governing Body is in the process of appointing two permanent teachers to lead in literacy and mathematics. The school has four newly qualified teachers. There has been some pupil mobility, but the school roll is steadily increasing.

## Main findings

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has taken decisive and appropriate action to address the areas for improvement. These actions are very much part of the well-planned journey to good, which began prior to the inspection in November 2013. The change of leadership has been a driving force for change and the headteacher, supported by the governing body, has left no stone unturned in her efforts to improve the school. This has motivated many staff and brought the team together with a shared vision and commitment to be good, sooner than later.

It is clear that leaders are not afraid to tackle the issues in teaching that have been limiting pupils' progress for too long. They have worked tirelessly to do this. Hence the high turnover of staff and the need to appoint a number of newly qualified teachers at the start of and during the academic year. The support provided by the deputy headteacher and the partner school, means these inexperienced teachers have improved rapidly. In addition, the teaching of more experienced teachers is improving as a result of the actions taken. This is impacting on the level of progress pupils are making in most classes, but not all. Leaders agree that teaching is still too variable and this is reflected in what we saw in class during my visit and in pupils' work. Leaders have plans to address this further.

A change in the professional culture of the school means that staff know what is expected of them and are being held to account more rigorously than before. The local authority and governing body speak of a school that, 'looks different and feels different'.

The improved use of data is enabling teachers to better-match teaching to the ability of pupils and target interventions more effectively. The introduction of a new marking and feedback policy is at an early stage of implementation. It is too early to say if this is impacting on the progress pupils make and increasing their understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to improve.

Since the inspection, a key priority for the governing body has been to secure and sustain the leadership of the school. It has appointed the acting-headteacher to the permanent headship and it is in the process of appointing literacy and numeracy leads. In the meantime, senior leaders have drawn upon some of the expertise within school, the local authority and the Futures Learning Partnership to help them to raise standards in writing and mathematics. But as yet, the headteacher and deputy headteacher are still having to take the lead in these areas.

Leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of where the school is at because of the regular and more rigorous checks made and the quality of information shared. They seek to confirm their judgements by inviting the local authority and the partner school to support and challenge their evaluations. There is a spirit of openness and honesty in the professional relationship the headteacher has with them and other external partners.

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 is continuing to provide effective support to the school, having noted concerns prior to the inspection in November 2013. Consultants are working with staff to improve teaching in writing and mathematics. The schools' achievement officer knows the school very well and undertakes regular monitoring visits and is providing good support for senior leaders. Given the progress the school is making under the leadership of the new headteacher, this support has recently been reduced.

The school works within an established partnership of schools in Bradford. Its work with Wibsey Primary School has been instrumental in improving teaching, particularly for newly qualified teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Bowyer

**Her Majesty's Inspector**