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11 April 2014

Mr Terry Woollin  
Headteacher  
Low Ash Primary School  
Wrose Road  
Wrose  
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West Yorkshire  
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Dear Mr Woollin

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Low Ash Primary School, Bradford**

Following my visit to your school on 10 April 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 January 2014. 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. These actions are still very much part of the well-planned improvement journey begun in September. This was recognised in the inspection in January.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, senior and middle leaders, the Governing Body, pupils and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated and up-dated information about pupil's achievement and attendance checked. We visited lessons, spoke with pupils and staff and scrutinised a sample of pupils' work.

**Context**

There have been no changes to staffing since the inspection.

## **Main findings**

The school's action plan is comprehensive and focused on the areas for improvement. You know precisely what you want good teaching to look like. There is a clear cycle for improvement that involves training and support, time for application and then review and evaluation. You have invested heavily in time and funding to do this. You are clear about what is needed to gather an accurate view of teaching and pupil progress. Measurable outcomes for the quality of teaching and pupil progress mean all know what is being aimed for and checks can be made against these to challenge the progress the school is making. The plan identifies the links made with the local authority and partner schools to support improvements and includes the use of paid external consultants. It makes clear who will lead actions and who will be responsible for checking and evaluating the impact of them within a clear time frame. This includes the governing body and the local authority.

Your drive to improve the school means that you have identified other areas for development since the inspection, such as improving outcomes for children in the early years and have taken a number of actions to address this. Changes to the national curriculum in September are also a feature of the improvement work you are undertaking, particularly in relation to the actions to improve writing and mathematics.

Aspects of teaching are improving. The systems and procedures introduced are evident in practice and there is increasing consistency in their use. For instance there is a greater adherence to policy and procedure for the marking of pupils' work and providing feedback but, some teachers are using it more effectively than others to aid pupils' progress. A few teachers do not always give pupils the time they need to respond in order to improve their work, or address misconceptions. In some lessons and through the work scrutiny, we saw a better match of teaching to pupils' ability and more opportunities in mathematics to challenge pupils at all levels. Nevertheless, this is still not yet as consistent as it needs to be and in some cases, is slowing learning and progress, especially in mathematics. Thus, for some teachers the support is becoming increasingly bespoke. This has helped these teachers to improve their teaching further but, you say this has not been as much as you expected and you are taking action to address this. Through the development of some of your teachers, you have increased the capacity within school to help others improve and this is becoming an expectation, especially of those on the upper pay scale.

The latest pupil progress information indicates that progress is continuing to accelerate and more pupils are now on track to meet their end of year targets. For older pupils, this has meant reducing the size of teaching groups for mathematics, reading and writing, as well as targeting interventions. This is taking up the time of senior leaders but, you say this has been necessary in order to close gaps in learning and provide the challenge that historically has not been afforded these pupils. Your expectations are very clear that, all teachers must contribute effectively to pupil progress through nothing less than good and outstanding teaching and you are holding them to account more rigorously for this.

Our visits to lessons, discussions with pupils and what we saw in books showed that pupils now have more opportunities to write at length. In the lessons we visited there were some very positive features seen that were resulting in raised achievement. We saw purposeful writing tasks linked to what pupils were learning and doing in other areas of the curriculum. This was motivating pupils to write. In some classes, we could see from pupils' work and the environment that careful steps in teaching and learning had been undertaken to lead to a piece of extended writing. These teachers had clear expectations and were promoting independence in the use of language features, vocabulary punctuation and spellings by ensuring that the pupils had the necessary skills and resources to do this. Adults were providing effective support by checking pupils' work and discussing it during the writing process. All pupils spoken to, including boys and the least able, were motivated and confident to write because of this. We agreed that this is leading to some high quality writing but again, this standard and expectation is not yet consistent across school and in some cases, within a year group.

In the mathematics lessons we visited and from our scrutiny of pupils' books, we saw the improvements that have been made in teaching. The impact of actions in mathematics is particularly strong in some classes, but not all. The standard of work over time is matching assessment data. There is clear evidence that teachers have increased the amount of challenge in mathematics and there are more opportunities to use and apply. There is a better match of teaching and task to ability and marking, feedback and assessment are being used more precisely than before. Pupils are responding by correcting their work or being given time with the teacher to address misconceptions. This needs further development as inconsistencies remain. The expectation about the amount of work pupils complete is also inconsistent and in some classes pupils spend too long on tasks they can already do. This is slowing the pace of learning for some and not allowing them to tackle harder work other than in the 'Explore' activity. Presentation in mathematics is generally good and improving over time. We discussed how the learning journey can be better mapped in pupil's books so that pupils have a better sense and record of their learning and to make clearer what teaching and learning is like over time.

During my visit, I saw no indication that behaviour is still an issue in the school. In fact, pupils were very positive about the changes you have made to the behaviour policy in which they have had a say. They are pleased that there is a greater focus on recognising their good behaviour and are excited about the changes planned for the playground which, they say will help with behaviour at break and lunchtimes. They say they were disappointed that their behaviour let the school down on inspection and they have taken responsibility for it and want it to be good. They were adamant they feel safe at all times.

Attendance is improving as a result of the actions you have taken.

The Governing Body is well-equipped to provide the challenge and support needed. It is proactive about its own development and is actively seeking support for this. It has requested that information from leaders, such as the teaching profile and achievement data is presented succinctly to allow it to make checks against the action plan, ask the right questions and provide the challenge needed. Governors undertake some monitoring activities in school and we discussed how they could develop this further.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. Governors requested that I attend the summer term governors' meeting to check on the quality of the information they receive and check how well they provide challenge to further support them in improving their effectiveness.

### **External support**

The local authority is providing appropriate and effective support to the school through the work of the School Improvement Adviser and a consultant. The school has actively sought the help of schools in its local partnership and has self-funded an external consultant to help with curriculum development and mathematics.

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**