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Mrs Lisa Metcalfe  
Headteacher  
Ackworth Howard Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior and Infant School  
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WF7 7HH

Dear Mrs Metcalfe

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ackworth Howard Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior and Infant School, Wakefield**

Following my visit to your school on 19 May 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 February 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. The school should take further action to:

- ensure the information provided to governors includes clear and measurable targets against which success can be judged over-time
- ensure sufficient detail is included in school action plans about current and future improvement activities to give governors an accurate view of developments in the school
- ensure all governors, leaders and staff have a clear understanding of the characteristics of highly effective learning and teaching and what this looks like in lessons, pupils' work and the progress that pupils can be expected to make.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, a group of pupils, middle leaders, governors, school support staff and representatives of the local authority and the diocese. I evaluated a range of documentation including: the school improvement plan; data tracking pupils' progress and the local authority support plan. In addition we undertook a tour of the school.

## **Main Findings**

You have worked relentlessly to ensure systems and procedures are in place to support your drive to improve the school. You and your senior leaders are resolute in your conviction to lead the school effectively so that it is judged to be good or better when it is next inspected. You have responded well to the areas for improvement from the previous inspection, working with urgency to lay the foundations for improvements in the consistency and quality of teaching and learning across the school. Actions taken include:

- developing the role of support staff through training and new appraisal processes so they are better able to support the needs of all learners
- making sure teachers' assessment information on what pupils can do is accurate and supports them to plan more appropriate and challenging activities
- developing the role of middle leaders by clarifying roles and providing additional support so that they understand they are accountable for their own areas of responsibility
- working within a range of partnership arrangements to share best practice between schools.

In addition, you have introduced a range of measures that has improved pupils' attitudes to their learning and further improved their behaviour in and around the school. This has helped pupils settle into lessons more readily and be more focussed on their learning.

Systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning have been tightened. There are regular reviews of how well pupils are achieving and increasingly staff are held to account for the progress their pupils are making. Recent reviews carried out across the school show that these actions are beginning to improve some aspects of the quality of teaching and learning. However this picture is not yet consistent across all classes. Challenge and support is being provided where teachers' performance needs further improvement.

The school improvement plan addresses the areas identified in the recent inspection and has rightly prioritised actions linked to improving teaching and learning. However, it does not give a clear picture of proposed actions and some actions currently being taken by the school are not captured in sufficient detail. Milestones and success criteria are in place but lack clarity. This makes it difficult for governors to pinpoint with accuracy how well the school is improving over time.

Governors continue to provide strong leadership. They know the day to day workings of the school and have held meetings to agree the school action plan and are very knowledgeable about the work being undertaken by you and your staff.

Governors are keen to be more effective and since the inspection they have undertaken a number of actions, including restructuring committees and accessing additional training where required. Further work is required on the information provided to governors about the proportions of pupils making expected and better than expected progress across 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**

The use of external support is a strength of the school. A range of partnerships with good and outstanding schools have contributed to securing the accuracy with which the school views itself and provided support for governors, teachers and middle leaders in developing their roles.

The local authority has maintained a monitoring role and reported accurately on the impact of developments in the school. A school support plan sits alongside the school action plan but the two plans have not yet been fully aligned

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Brown

**Her Majesty's Inspector**