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Mrs Claire Brady
Headteacher
Wilthorpe Primary School
Greenfoot Lane
Barnsley
West Yorkshire
S75 1EG

Dear Mrs Brady

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wilthorpe Primary School, Barnsley

Following my visit to your school on 21 May 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 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:

- raise teachers' expectations of the progress that should be made by the most able pupils
- evaluate the impact of changes you have made to the way teachers plan lessons, and check whether the learning activities planned for the most able pupils result in them making good progress
- ensure members of the governing body visit the school and discuss with teachers and pupils the impact of planned actions on the quality of teaching and achievement.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with: you and other senior leaders; a representative of the local authority and the Local Leader of Education, who is supporting the school; a group of teachers; and the Chair and other members of the governing body. You accompanied me on a tour of the school in which we observed the pupils' attitudes to learning and looked at work in some books. I evaluated the school's plans for improvement and scrutinised a range of documents, including records of checks on teaching and pupil progress data.

Context

Since the last inspection, one teacher has left the school. A second teacher will leave the school at the end of the summer term. Three long-term supply teachers continue to work in the school. The school intends to make three full-time appointments of teachers, to begin in September 2014. One member of the governing body has resigned and a new governor will join the governing body in June.

Main findings

Although you and other members of staff were disappointed by the outcome of the inspection, you have put in place plans to address the areas for improvement and progress is being made. Following the most recent inspection, you worked with a Local Leader of Education to review the quality of teaching, and together you drew up detailed plans for improvement. You accept the quality of teaching needs to improve further, in order to raise achievement. All members of staff have received training on the features of outstanding lessons and have worked together to develop a new format for planning lessons and a new marking policy. Teachers told me they believe these new approaches are improving their practice. However, on our tour of classrooms, we did not see enough evidence that planned activities are yet meeting the differing needs of pupils.

You have set more ambitious targets for achievement and have ensured teachers are being held accountable for the progress of pupils. You have also acted to ensure more pupils in Year 5 and 6 are being entered for the higher level papers in Key Stage 2 SATs.

Behaviour in the school is improving. You have taken steps to ensure pupils are supervised more closely, and the result is movement around the school is now calm and orderly. Although there are a number of pupils with challenging behaviour, the number of fixed-term exclusions is reducing. The introduction of a nurture facility has helped to moderate the behaviour of the most challenging pupils in lower Key Stage 2.

Senior leaders in the school are working closely with colleagues from Burton Road Primary School to ensure routines for checking on the school's performance are

rigorous. This is helping some senior leaders to quickly address areas of weakness. For example, good support is been provided for teachers who lacked the skills to manage challenging behaviour effectively. Other senior leaders still need to sharpen their skills further, in order to address weaknesses in teaching in their areas of responsibility.

Since the inspection, the governing body has formed a committee focused on monitoring the impact of the school's improvement planning. Committee meetings are attended by a representative of the local authority and by the Local leader of Education. This committee now receives good quality information from the headteacher, and consequently is now better placed to ask probing questions of senior leaders. However, governors do not routinely visit the school to gather first-hand information about the impact of planned actions in the school development plan.

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 providing an appropriate level of support and challenge to the school. The local authority has brokered the support of the headteacher of Burton Road Primary School, who is a Local Leader of Education. He and his colleagues are providing generous support to the school and this is helping to identify and tackle areas of underperformance. An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium is yet to take place, although the school has already done much to refine its use of pupil premium funding.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector