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Miss Sarah Horsbrough
Headteacher
St Luke's CofE Primary School
Fagley Lane
Eccleshill
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD2 3NS

Dear Miss Horsbrough

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Luke's CofE Primary School, Bradford

Following my visit to your school on 25 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 March 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

The school is taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in spite of the ineffective action of some governors. Immediate action should be taken by the local authority to:

- Apply to the Secretary of State to appoint an interim executive board if the governing body cannot agree a way forward.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, a middle leader for Key Stage 2 and mathematics, seven members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. We visited lessons spoke with pupils and undertook a work scrutiny.

Main findings

The inspection has meant that you have been able to refocus and address issues with renewed vigour, secure in the knowledge that your own self-evaluation of where the school was at prior to the inspection was accurate. Because of this, there is already some very clear evidence that your actions are bearing fruit.

The school's development plan has been amended to incorporate the areas for improvement. Very little needed adding, as you were already clear about what action needed to be taken. Actions are appropriate with outcomes that are measurable. There is increased rigour in the monitoring of all actions and timelines make clear that you expect rapid improvement. Most staff are responding positively to the challenges you have set. It is in these classes that there have been notable improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' work since the inspection. This is starting to improve standards of achievement.

Systems and procedures for supporting staff and holding them to account, as well as the rigorous monitoring of teaching have brought about improvements at a pace. No stone has been left unturned in your drive to raise standards. For many staff, these actions have given them the confidence to know they can teach well and consistently so. Some are becoming increasingly self-reflective and know before you tell them what they need to improve. For others who are not as willing or able to improve as rapidly, it is leaving no hiding place.

A comparison of pupils' work prior to the inspection and after clearly demonstrates the impact of some of the immediate actions you have taken. For instance, the use of one book for writing is ensuring marking and feedback is more effective because, pupils know what they do well and precisely what they need to improve. Subsequently, they are applying this to all their writing, not only in English but across the curriculum. There is clearer progression in the use of basic skills and language features and where pupils are given time to address errors or improve their work, it is speeding up their progress. This is further supported by verbal marking within the lesson where, increasingly, teachers are intervening judiciously to improve pupils' work and address errors or mis-conceptions. Pupils say they like this and it is helping them to get better. They feel their work is of more value and are motivated by this. The systematic teaching of handwriting from Reception and the introduction of a pen licence have motivated pupils to improve their handwriting and presentation. There is a remarkable difference in the standard of handwriting and presentation before and after the inspection. Less use of worksheets has resulted in a better quality of writing and greater productivity.

You recognise that there is still much to do. Training and support to improve the teaching of mathematics is starting to bear fruit but, both you and the mathematics lead say it is not yet enough. Your next focus is to drive forward improvements in the teaching of mathematics further and close the gaps in achievement for groups of pupils, such as those eligible for pupil premium. The school's own latest pupil

performance information indicates that, although these pupils are making better progress, the gap widens as they move through school. You have taken action to address this and in progress meetings, you are challenging staff more about the underachievement of groups and individuals. You are also thinking more carefully about where best to target and use the additional funding you have. Providing challenge for the most able is another area you are focusing on and we were able to see in some lessons how teachers were structuring their lessons better to ensure these pupils were challenged and well provided for.

You and the deputy headteacher, supported by the mathematics and Key Stage 2 lead, continue to be the driving force behind improvements. A new appointment for September of an early years and key stage one leader will further increase the capacity of the leadership team. Meanwhile, you have taken action to distribute some responsibility for inclusion to very capable and specialised support staff who, focus on the care and well-being of pupils to ensure they are better equipped, socially and emotionally, to learn.

The review of the Governing Body and use of pupil premium has been undertaken. Although it finds governors are committed to the school, disagreements within the governing body mean that it has not focused enough on the job in hand. Too much time in meetings is being spent on peripheral issues and a dispute that has been resolved using the agreed policies and procedures. It has failed to produce an appropriate action plan and is clearly not in a position to do so. The local authority has taken prompt action by issuing a warning notice to which there has been no response. This will result in the local authority applying to the Secretary of State for Education for permission to relieve the governing body of its duties and appoint an interim executive board, if governors cannot agree on a way forward.

It would be wrong and unfair to say the school is not taking effective action because of this and would undermine your hard work and that of your staff to improve standards. There is much evidence to show that there are notable improvements in teaching, pupils' behaviour for learning and achievement since the inspection.

External support

The Local Authority is providing effective support. The school achievement officer visits regularly to check on the school's progress and challenges you to demonstrate the impact of your actions. You have appreciated this support at a time when some members of the governing body have not been as supportive as they need to be and in some instances, have undermined your focus on raising standards. Additional support has been provided from governor services and human resources, which you say has been valuable in helping you to tackle some difficult issues.

Strong school partnerships with local schools have been maintained. These are supporting school improvement, through training, network meetings and facilitating visits to schools to help staff observe, reflect and improve their own practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Bowyer

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- Mrs Helen Storey- Senior Her Majesty's Inspector