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Miss Celia Oates
Headteacher
Branton St Wilfrid's Church of England Primary School
Valley Drive
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Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN3 3NB

Dear Miss Oates

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Branton St Wilfrid's Church of England Primary School, Doncaster

Following my visit to your school on 25 September 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 April 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:

- tweak the school's action and development plans to make sure the whole school community understands the improvements leaders expect to see at interim checks
- make sure pupils, especially the most able, are consistently challenged by their work and develop resilience
- improve the quality of teachers comments on pupils' written work so that they are more precise about what pupils have done well and what they need to do next to improve their learning
- eliminate the remaining instances of pupils chatting when they should be working
- further develop leaders' skills in checking on the quality of the school's work and using the information to secure improvements
- plan how and when leaders will take on more of the responsibilities currently undertaken by the Executive Headteacher
- continue to improve communication and relationships with parents.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you, the Executive Headteacher and other senior leaders. I spoke formally to a small group of pupils and informally to others during lunchtime. I also met with members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority. I evaluated the school's action and development plans. I toured the school with you and the Executive Headteacher. During the tour we made brief visits to lessons and looked at pupils' books.

Context

An Executive Headteacher has been appointed to support the school for two days a week. Three teachers, including one senior leader have left the school and three teachers have taken up their posts.

Main findings

With support from the Executive Headteacher, you have secured permanent teachers and strengthened the senior leadership team. This has given leaders more time to check on the quality of teaching and pupils' work. Middle and senior leaders regularly watch lessons and check pupils' work and they are using their findings more effectively to bring about improvements. For example, the recent results show that more pupils in Year 6 last year made the progress expected for their age. However, there are still not enough pupils who make good progress.

In lessons, pupils are clear about how they are expected to behave and say teachers are more consistent in insisting they catch up if they do not complete all their work in the lesson. However, some pupils report that there are still occasions when their learning is disrupted by a few pupils who chat rather than concentrating on their work.

Teachers have raised their expectations of pupils and work is more demanding. There are more frequent examples of most able pupils being offered extra challenges to help them deepen their understanding and improve their mastery of important skills. However, this is not consistent and there are still occasions when pupils are required to practice skills they have already grasped. For example, pupils' work in their mathematics books shows they have done too many similar calculations instead of trying a more difficult set of numbers.

Marking has improved and teachers have made a concerted effort to offer pupils comments on what they have done well and what they need to do next to improve their work. Some teachers do this very well and pupils respond to their comments and make good progress, but again this lacks consistency. For pupils in some classes the teachers' comments are not clear enough. For example, pupils are asked to, 'take care with punctuation' but because the teacher has not explained what element of punctuation needs attention, pupils continue to make the same mistakes.

The schools' action and development plans are appropriate and leaders have identified when they will check on progress. However, there is not enough clarity about what exactly they will look for at these interim checks. This makes it difficult for leaders and governors to know what they should expect to see.

Governors continue to provide the school with a sound level of challenge and support. They take an active role in checking on improvements. They have ensured parents get regular newsletters and check that complaints are dealt with quickly. However, some parents remain dissatisfied with the quality of day-to-day communication. Leaders and governors know they need to do more to make sure all parents have confidence that their concerns are taken seriously.

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 has been effective in ensuring the school has the support of the Executive Headteacher who has established strong links with the partner school. Consequently, teachers have frequent opportunities to observe good practice and this is leading to better quality teaching.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Doncaster and the Diocese of Sheffield.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt
Her Majesty's Inspector