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5 December 2014

Miss Josephine Kerr
Headteacher
Farnley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Farnley Lane
Farnley, Otley
West Yorkshire
LS21 2QJ

Dear Miss Kerr

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Farnley Church of England
Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 4 December 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Please extend my thanks to the senior teacher and staff for the help they gave during the inspection and for the time they made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time: The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service for North Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Lee Owston

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2014

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better so that all pupils make at least good progress throughout the school and develop good or better attitudes to learning by:
 - raising teachers' expectations and those of the pupils, as to what pupils are capable of achieving and ensure that pupils work harder and learn more effectively in lessons
 - making sure that teachers make accurate judgements about each pupil's attainment and progress in order to plan learning that delivers good and consistent progress for all groups of pupils
 - making sure teachers use questioning well to check the progress that pupils are making during lessons and make adjustments to their teaching where necessary
 - giving pupils precise guidance about the progress they are making, how they can improve their work and by making sure that all pupils respond to teachers' marking by correcting errors in their work.
- Ensure that all pupils make good progress in writing and in mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - making sure that the needs of the most able pupils are fully met
 - making sure that pupils are given regular opportunities to develop their writing skills across all subjects and that high standards of presentation are established
 - developing regular opportunities for pupils to write and record work for themselves in subjects other than literacy
 - making sure that teachers plan lessons so that pupils have regular opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Ensure that the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables them to make good or better progress in each area of their development by:
 - carrying out a thorough analysis of the skills of staff working with the Early Years Foundation Stage and ensure this is followed through with actions to address any deficiencies
 - making sure that the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are met.
- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance by:
 - implementing procedures for managing the performance of staff so that their targets are directly related to the progress pupils make
 - developing the leadership skills of staff so they can be effective in leading aspects of the school's work

provide high quality training to the school's staff to ensure they have the skills they need to carry out their duties effectively
ensuring the governing body has the skills needed to hold the school to account for its performance and how it compares to other schools.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 4 December 2014

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with both members of teaching staff, three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and two representatives from the local authority. The inspector made visits to both classrooms to observe teaching, speak to pupils informally about their learning and scrutinise the current level of work in pupils' books. He also evaluated a wide range of documentation, including the school's analysis of pupils' current attainment and progress and the minutes of governing body meetings.

Context

Almost all of the staff have changed since the last inspection. New teachers took up their posts in each class at the beginning of the academic year and a teaching assistant has been appointed to support the youngest children. There is also a new school administrator. The headteacher continues to have a teaching commitment of one day per week in the Key Stage 2 class. The governing body has reconstituted; elections are underway to recruit an additional parent governor. The headteacher was absent at the time of this inspection.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils are making better progress in all aspects of their learning. An analysis of school data, pupils' responses during lessons and a scrutiny of completed work confirms that the long-standing pattern of underachievement is beginning to be reversed. The overwhelming majority of pupils are now making at least the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics. While cohort sizes fluctuate greatly from year to year, pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are on track to attain standards that are likely to be at least in line with the national average for English and mathematics by the end of the year. The most able pupils, however, are not making the same rate of progress as their peers. Although there is evidence of improvement, this group of pupils remain a priority.

The quality of teaching

Pupils are making better progress because the quality of teaching has improved in both classes. Staff expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are rising and assessment information is being used more regularly to set work that is at the correct level for pupils' abilities. Pupils' work confirms that lessons are becoming more challenging, although those who are most able are not yet being stretched to reach their full potential; some still complete work that they have already mastered and this wastes valuable learning time.

The teaching of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved significantly; practice now meets all of the statutory requirements for this age group. More accurate assessment of children's starting points and an appropriate balance between whole-class work and time for children to choose activities for themselves have been achieved. Staff are aware that they need to plan for greater interaction with children during their 'choosing time', to ask questions, ensure the correct use of vocabulary or demonstrate how to complete an activity, to ensure maximum progress.

Marking and feedback to pupils are developing. Teachers' comments in books tell pupils what they have done well and where they could make improvements. Time for pupils to respond to their teachers' advice is less consistent so that some errors still go unchecked by pupils and are repeated. While pupils in Key Stage 2 understand that they have individual targets to work towards, they are unclear about what they have to do next to achieve a higher level.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour has improved steadily since the previous inspection. New staff have been quick to demonstrate high expectations of what is and is not acceptable and ensure greater consistency in applying the school's behaviour policy. Records show that the amount of low-level disruption and poor behaviour evident in the past have reduced significantly. Even when poor behaviour does still have to be addressed, staff were observed reacting in an assured and positive manner so that no time was wasted and the impact on other learners was minimal. In part, this is also due to a marked improvement in pupils' own attitudes to learning.

Staff have prioritised improvement to their classrooms so that they have quickly become calm and purposeful places to learn. Display frequently motivates pupils to give of their best through the celebration of successful work. Pupils themselves are beginning to demonstrate higher ambitions for their own achievement as teachers become more adept at providing work that is at just the right level of challenge. Pupils are now ready to become involved in their own learning through a more detailed understanding of their English and mathematics targets.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Stronger leadership has brought about improved performance but it has not been an easy journey. All leaders, including governors, have had to undertake significant training to carry out their multiple responsibilities within a small school. Staff, including the headteacher, continue to balance day-to-day teaching commitments alongside new and varied leadership roles. They report that this demanding workload, together with the sheer scale and urgency of the task ahead, has, at times, proved overwhelming. Nevertheless, a strong sense of teamwork and the commitment to work hard has resulted in important strides forward. Governors are

well aware that they will need to re-evaluate the leadership and teaching commitments of staff constantly if the early signs of improvement are to be sustainable.

The fundamental systems and processes needed to check on the work of the school are strengthening. The setting of ambitious targets for what pupils are to achieve and the careful tracking of progress towards them have enabled leaders to know where they have been successful and where further work is needed. While much remains to be done, a clear improvement plan is in place to address the areas for improvement in a timely fashion.

The governing body monitors the work of the school closely through frequent meetings of the rapid improvement group (RIG). Minutes of governing body meetings record that there is increased challenge from members around the success of new initiatives and the overall rate of improvement. A programme of visits to school are now underway. This first-hand experience of school life is broadening all governors' understanding of what needs to be done to maintain the current trajectory of improvement.

External support

The local authority and diocese have provided effective challenge and support to the school through regular attendance at RIG meetings and a programme of professional coaching. Governors have particularly appreciated the opportunity to accompanying the education development adviser on monitoring activities and have started to undertake this work on their own.

School-to-school support has been particularly appreciated by teachers. The opportunity to share approaches and observe the best practice of colleagues who teach in similar schools has contributed to the overall improvements to teaching and achievement. Staff are eager for this kind of professional development to continue.