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12 February 2015

Mr Dominic James  
Headteacher  
St Stephen's Tockholes CofE Primary School  
Rock Lane  
Tockholes  
Darwen  
Lancashire  
BB3 0LX

Dear Mr James

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Stephen's Tockholes CofE Primary School, Blackburn with Darwen**

Following my visit to the school on 25 February 2015, 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 December 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:

- Immediately review the headteacher's performance against the agreed targets for the 2013-2014 academic year and set targets for 2014/15.
- Ensure the school's website meets national requirements.
- Make sure all adults use correct terminology in their teaching.

**Evidence**

During the inspection I met with you and with both teachers. I met with four members of the governing body and with the headteacher of the school that is supporting St Stephen's. I spoke with a representative of the local authority by telephone. I looked through some pupils' work and briefly visited each class to

observe some teaching. I read through some reports of visit from local authority and diocesan officers.

## **Main findings**

Since the inspection you have reviewed the school's spending of the pupil premium grant. You have organised an external review to be led by the headteacher of a school that was judged to be outstanding at its most recent inspection.

The governing body has appointed new governors to strengthen its ability to support and challenge the school. In addition, members meet more frequently and have improved communication and information sharing. As a result, governors are now fully aware of what is happening in the school. The governors have been working their way through the action plan which was drawn up as a result of the external review conducted by a National Leader in Governance. The relationship the governing body has with the local authority has improved significantly and as a result the school is making full use of the local authority's resources and expertise.

Despite these positive developments the governing body still has not established a system to make sure all of its statutory duties have been met. The website for example does not fully meet national requirements. It is a statutory duty for the governing body to set and review targets for the headteacher's performance management annually. The targets for last academic year still have not been reviewed. This is unacceptable. Governors should immediately review the headteacher's previous targets, set targets for the current academic year and put in place a performance management system that will not allow this situation to arise again.

Pupils' work and the most recent assessments indicate they are making quicker progress in reading, writing and mathematics. There is an issue with adults correct use of terminology. In one class in English the term 'bossy' verbs was used while in the other class the correct term of 'imperative' verbs was used. Similarly, in pupils' books in one class the teacher correctly referred to conjunctions but in the other class the term 'connectives' was used. The school should create a policy which ensures all adults use the correct English terminology.

There have been improvements to the teaching of mathematics which has resulted in pupils being more engaged in solving mathematics problems and more involved in explaining relationships in mathematics. While teachers used correct terminology in mathematics such as mass, some adults use terminology without the same precision. For example, adults used the term heaviest when comparing the mass of two objects instead of the correct term 'heavier'. The school should enable all adults to use accurate and correct terminology in all subjects.

There have been improvements to the quality and impact of marking. In the best examples pupils respond to the teachers' feedback and improve their work and then take account of the marking to improve future pieces of work.

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**

External support has been intense and effective. It has built leaders' and governors' capacity to improve. Leaders now need to show they know how to improve the school themselves without so much intense support and without spending so much time in other schools. The external support has ensured the teachers' assessment of pupils' work is more accurate and has improved the ethos in the school and pupils' spirituality.

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

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr

### **Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools