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20 March 2015

Mrs Louise Newport
Consultant Headteacher
Farnley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Farnley Lane
Farnley
West Yorkshire
LS21 2QJ

Dear Mrs Newport

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

Following my visit to your school on 19 March 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third 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 not making enough 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, the Director of Children's Services for North Yorkshire and as below.

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 third monitoring inspection on 19 March 2015

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the consultant headteacher, acting headteacher, both members of teaching staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor, and two representatives from the local authority. Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) visited both classrooms to observe teaching, speak to pupils informally about their learning and scrutinise the current standard of work in pupils' books. Observations were conducted jointly alongside the consultant and acting headteacher. HMI also evaluated a wide range of documentation, including the school's analysis of pupils' current attainment and progress and the most recent checks made on the quality of teaching.

Context

The substantive headteacher has been absent from work since November 2014. Leadership responsibilities have been shared between the consultant headteacher, a new acting headteacher and the teacher-in-charge. The consultant headteacher, already offering support prior to the absence of the headteacher, has increased her support to three half-days per week. An acting headteacher has been appointed to lead the school for three days per week and fulfil the 0.2 weekly teaching commitment of the substantive headteacher. The Key Stage 2 teacher operates as the teacher-in-charge during the two half-days each week that neither the consultant or acting headteacher are present. Two new governors have recently been appointed.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' progress has stalled. The early signs of improvement identified in the autumn term have not been maintained, particularly in mathematics. Recent assessments show that around half of the pupils in Key Stage 2 are not on track to make the progress expected by the end of the key stage in this subject. While recent initiatives introduced by the new acting headteacher are improving pupils' mental recall of key number facts, there is too little opportunity for pupils to apply what they have learnt and deepen their understanding, for example, through reasoning and problem-solving activities. The significant deficits in pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding, evident over time, are not being addressed rapidly enough to bring about the sharp rise in attainment that is needed.

The progress made by the most able pupils remains a concern; too few are on track to reach the higher levels of attainment they are capable of achieving by the end of the year. Leaders have not shone a sufficient spotlight on the achievements of this particular group; consequently, teaching lacks challenge and the most able fail to reach their true potential.

The quality of teaching

Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching between classes, subjects and groups of pupils are hampering a swifter rate of progress. While there have been some quick wins, such as a more consistent approach to handwriting and effective marking and feedback to pupils about their work, these have only just scratched the surface of what needs to be done. The complacency of some staff about exactly how far their practice has travelled prevents the further improvement that is so urgently needed.

The teaching of mathematics needs greater attention. Teachers understand the need to plan work that meets pupils' different levels of mathematical ability, but are less secure in identifying the small, incremental steps in learning that pupils need in order to make quicker progress. As a result, pupils often complete activities that practise skills they have already mastered in a previous term, especially in Key Stage 1. Pupils' learning does not build in sufficient depth or complexity to enable them to reach higher standards and make up for the significant underachievement of the past.

The quality of teaching in the early years remains ineffective. Despite this issue being raised over one year ago, adult interactions with children remain too infrequent. Staff do not work alongside children during activities they choose for themselves to explain, demonstrate or question them so that their learning is appropriately extended during play.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Adults continue to apply the school rules consistently so that incidence of poor behaviour have reduced further. Pupils' learning behaviours are less well developed. When work lacks challenge or fails to offer sufficient interest, pupils' concentration wanes and learning time is lost; time that pupils cannot afford to waste.

Pupils say that they now have a much clearer understanding of their own strengths and areas for improvement than they did in the past. They appreciate the depth of marking and feedback they now receive from their teachers. Time for pupils to read their teacher's comments and respond are increasing so that pupils readily learn from their past mistakes. The continued use of 'learning walls' to display the journey through a unit of work is providing an effective support for pupils. Many pupils were seen using the word lists or calculation strategies presented on the walls when they became stuck or needed a fresh idea.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Governors are aware that the long-term leadership of the school needs to be secured quickly so that there is greater stability for staff and pupils. While the interim arrangements are appropriate, uncertainty about how long these will last

brings significant challenges at a time when new approaches are still being developed and those already being implemented need further time to embed. Staff, in particular, are worried that their ways of working could be changed again and this could risk further delay to the school's improvement journey.

Subject leadership is developing but it has not been without cost. Delegating responsibility to middle leaders has placed significant, extra demands on both teachers at a time when they are not yet secure in their own day-to-day teaching practices. The stalling of pupils' progress this term is, in part, due to teachers' time and energy being spread too wide. Leaders need to take stock of current developments and ensure that, as a priority, the quality of teaching is improved before further leadership responsibilities are devolved to the staff team.

Monitoring of teaching has increased in frequency since the arrival of the consultant and acting headteacher, but it needs to be more focussed in its approach. Lesson observation, work scrutiny and analysis of pupils' progress data all play their part in judging the overall quality of teaching, but too little attention is paid to the difference teaching makes to the progress of different pupil groups, especially the most able.

Governors continue to develop their skills so that they offer an appropriate level of challenge to school leaders. However, they have not picked up as quickly as they should on the slowing of pupils' progress because they are not all aware of where pupils should be in their learning at different stages throughout the year. Leaders accept that revisions to the school improvement plan are now needed so that the termly targets for each pupil group, class and subject are clearly known and understood.

External support

The local authority was quick in its appointment of interim leaders to ensure a continuous leadership presence at the school. The consultant headteacher and acting headteacher were well chosen, based on their complementary skills and expertise in leading small, rural schools.

Teachers continue to appreciate the support they receive from subject specialists within the authority. However, visits to see good or better schools in similar contexts have not been as frequent as needed to improve the quality of teaching. Although moderation activities alongside other schools have recently been undertaken, external moderation of Reception, Year 2 and Year 6 assessments will be crucial at the end of the year to ensure the accuracy of statutory assessment data.