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20 May 2015

Mr Sean Smith  
Headteacher  
Nessfield Primary School  
Nessfield Drive  
Keighley  
West Yorkshire  
BD22 6NP

Dear Mr Smith

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Nessfield Primary School, Bradford**

Following my visit to your school on 19 May 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 January 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- Secure teachers' understanding and subject expertise, particularly in English and mathematics to ensure progression throughout the curriculum
- Ensure all teachers' marking and feedback is effective in accelerating pupils' progress
- Address gaps in the capacity of the school's leadership to lead and monitor work in English and mathematics
- Deepen leaders' evaluative skills when monitoring and reporting on the effectiveness of their actions
- Review the improvement plan to ensure it states clearly how improvements will be made, precisely articulates what success will look like at key points on the journey to 'good' and robustly evaluates the impact of leaders' actions.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and your deputy headteacher, four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan. You accompanied me on a tour of the school and we visited classrooms to look at pupils' learning during which a selection of pupils' work was scrutinised. I met with a small group of pupils to talk about behaviour. I looked at a range of documents, including records of the school's monitoring activities, documents relating to a forthcoming review of pupil premium funding and minutes of governing body meetings.

## **Context**

Since the inspection two teachers have left the school. A further seven teachers have resigned and will be leaving at the end of the summer term. The former subject leaders resigned their responsibilities for leading English and mathematics in January 2015 and there remains no current subject leadership for these areas. Currently, temporary teachers are covering a number of classes. Leaders and governors have appointed a new Assistant Headteacher for September 2015, together with six other teachers, four of whom will be newly qualified.

## **Main findings**

Significant turbulence in staffing is hampering the school's efforts to move forward in improving the quality of teaching and ensuring that leaders' actions bring about the necessary improvements in teaching and leadership. Leaders and governors have undertaken a restructure of staffing but there are currently gaps in leadership, particularly in English and mathematics.

Although leaders have reviewed policies for marking and behaviour, these are still not being applied consistently. Leaders' monitoring has focused on ensuring teachers' marking complies with the new policy. Where teachers are following the agreed guidelines, scrutiny of pupils' books shows that marking and feedback sometimes misses important misconceptions and points for improvement. This is because some teachers are following the letter rather than the spirit of the policy and miss opportunities to ensure pupils know how to improve their work and make better progress.

The absence of subject expertise and leadership in English and mathematics means that important issues within the curriculum have not been identified, nor have weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge and low expectation been addressed. Consequently, pupils continue to repeat work they have done in previous years and, in some instances, older pupils are set easier work than younger pupils. Leaders have not identified this issue because the checks they make are not deep enough.

Pupils are generally positive about behaviour, saying that it has improved 'a little bit'. They are aware of the new policy and like being rewarded with 'smileys' for considerate and good behaviour. However, they are aware of inconsistencies in the way different teachers apply the new policy.

The school's 'post-Ofsted plan' addresses the areas for improvement but does not set out clearly how leaders will bring about improvement or state clearly how progress will be measured along the way. Consequently, this limits the ability of governors to hold leaders to account for the progress the school is making towards being judged 'good' at the next inspection. This is also hampered by a lack of evaluation in the reports and feedback governors receive about the progress the school is making.

A review of the school's use of funding known as the 'pupil premium' is underway but has not yet been completed. As a result, leaders have not been able to get on with addressing any recommendations it may make and take action to address the underperformance of disadvantaged pupils.

Ofsted will carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority has supported the headteacher well in managing some of the weakest teaching within the school. Support from partner schools is helping to develop leaders' skills in monitoring. Support from the mathematics consultant has been targeted at areas of weakness but improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement are frustratingly slow. The local authority's school specific monitoring group meets regularly to challenge leaders and governors. Nevertheless, reports about the effectiveness of the school's improvement are not evaluative enough to focus the school on what it must prioritise.

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

Adrian Guy

**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
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form [hns.efa@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:hns.efa@education.gsi.gov.uk)
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- For academies [[CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk)]
- For free schools, UTCs and studio schools [[open.FREESCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:open.FREESCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk)]
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school is a non-maintained special school [[hns.efa@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:hns.efa@education.gsi.gov.uk)]
- Department for Education [if the school is a non-maintained special school] [[registration.enquiries@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:registration.enquiries@education.gsi.gov.uk)]