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Mr Michael Watt  
Headteacher  
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DL9 4LS

Dear Mr Watt

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Colburn Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 19 November, 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 June 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, middle leaders, four governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. We visited classrooms together, spoke with pupils and looked at pupils' work. A range of documents were scrutinised, including the school development plan, records relating to the monitoring of teaching and governing body minutes. I checked documentation and information linked to safeguarding.

## **Context**

The school has appointed teachers to fill the vacancies that were present at the last inspection. Two new teachers took up post in September. An assistant headteacher now has responsibility for English and there is a new early years leader. The school has appointed a learning mentor.

## **Main findings**

Since the inspection judgement in June 2015, you have taken a positive and prompt approach to tackling the areas identified for improvement. Along with the school's governors you have implemented an innovative approach to recruiting the necessary teachers and middle leaders. This has provided a stable teaching staff and increased leadership capacity. The appointment of a learning mentor and increasing the leadership time for the deputy headteacher to complete her role as special educational needs coordinator have improved support for pupils with special educational needs.

You have brought about improvements in teaching for newer and established staff through well-planned training and induction and seeking effective practice both within school and beyond. The regular and robust checks that you, senior leaders and more recently middle leaders make are identifying where teaching is improving and identifying next steps for further development. You and your leaders are working hard to ensure that there is consistency in the approach and quality of teaching across the school. You recognise that while aspects of the school's work are improving, there is still further work to be completed.

The introduction of 'non-negotiables' along with changes to assessment, marking and feedback, are giving staff clear guidance on expectations for teaching, learning and assessment. The school's new approach to assessing pupils' progress in English and mathematics has been carefully thought through. Information gained from assessment is beginning to help teachers plan lessons that are better matched to pupils' learning needs. This information is also enabling leaders and governors to check pupils' progress and judge the impact of improvement work.

The appointment of middle leaders for early years and English is providing greater capacity in your leadership team. These leaders and the subject leader for mathematics have strengthened their skills for planning and checking on school improvements. This is because you have organised relevant training provided by specialist leaders in education. The deputy headteacher has begun to check more thoroughly the impact of teaching and interventions on the progress of pupils with disabilities and pupils with special educational needs. This is providing a more accurate view of the progress these pupils are making and where support is needed.

The early years leader is providing staff training, which is beginning to improve teachers' and teaching assistants' skills. The development of the learning environment and new resources in the early years are improving opportunities for children to become independent of adults and initiate activities themselves. You have set higher targets for children's achievements by the end of this year. This builds well on the improved early years results in 2015 and your work to establish more accurate starting points for children.

You have put in place a plan to address the areas for improvement in the previous inspection report. While the plan includes appropriate actions, it could be improved by identifying more specific timeframes, being clearer about the measures of success and providing greater detail about arrangements for monitoring and evaluation.

Governors are now more directly involved in providing support and challenge for senior and middle leaders. The linking of a governor to a school leader is starting to develop governors' understanding of the school's priorities. However, governors' meetings with school leaders to check on the rate of improvement over time are not sharply enough focused on pupils' achievement.

Ofsted may 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 school has benefited from a range of external support, including support from Swaledale Teaching Alliance, three specialist leaders of education and a local authority adviser. This has helped the school with improvements in developing middle leaders' skills. The local authority continues to check the progress on a termly basis. This support has had a positive impact on the school's improvements.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for North Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Michael Reeves  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**