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Mrs Sharon Stevenson
Barton Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Stevenson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Barton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 8 October 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 April 2015. 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 in order to become a good school.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plans, English and mathematics subject leaders' action plans, and the school's system for checking pupil progress were evaluated. Other documents were scrutinised including the outcomes of monitoring activities, reports to governors and local authority notes of visits.

Context

Since the previous inspection there has been one new teacher appointed.

Main findings

The headteacher and governors have a strong desire to become a good school. They are firmly focused on improving the quality of teaching in order to raise achievement further. The headteacher is very clear on what needs to be done and has identified realistic and manageable actions in the school development plan to bring about improvement. While the actions are generally fit for purpose, they need to be sharper so that governors can measure the impact of actions on pupils' progress in a timely manner. Furthermore, it is not always clear who is responsible for leading on the actions and how they will be monitored and evaluated.

The headteacher has correctly identified opportunities for professional development which will help to address weaknesses in teaching. This strategy has been adopted for individual members of staff requiring support and for whole-staff development to effectively implement new initiatives designed to improve standards. Effective support has been provided from the local authority, two local schools and the Swaledale Teaching School Alliance. The headteacher has augmented this support by monitoring changes in teaching and checking how they are making a difference to pupils' progress.

Changes in approaches to the leadership of English and early years are making a difference. Standards for all pupils, including the most able, in reading, grammar, spelling and punctuation have improved significantly. This is due to the work of the English subject leader who has focused on improving basic skills. Effective support in early years and careful management of staffing by the headteacher has ensured that children learn in a practical way with an increased emphasis on the development of independent skills. Support for the leadership and teaching of mathematics has not been as successful. Pupils are still not making the rapid progress needed to improve outcomes. A new mental mathematics approach is currently being implemented but it is too soon to measure the impact of this initiative.

Leaders are developing the school's systems to track pupil progress accurately in light of the national changes in assessment practice. A range of information is being used to identify pupils who are working below the level which is expected. Support programmes are being implemented so that pupils may catch up quickly.

Initiatives to improve behaviour are starting to have a positive impact. Clear protocols are now in place to deal with incidents and effective support is being given to those pupils who need it. Initiatives such as 'The Golden Mile' and warming up to music are ensuring pupils are engaged and ready to learn. However, there is still some evidence of low-level disruption in the classroom. This is directly linked to pupil motivation and engagement. Leaders are addressing this through tackling weaknesses in the quality of teaching.

Members of the governing body have responded positively to the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. They are now more

actively involved in monitoring the work of the school. Governors are also beginning to ask more searching questions and are more confident in requesting information regarding the progress pupils are making.

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 local authority has supported the headteacher by providing timely professional development for all staff in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school. They have also supported the governing body by providing training to improve the quality of their monitoring of the school's planned actions to improve. The local authority is currently negotiating a further support package through the Swaledale Teaching Alliance.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for North Yorkshire and the Director of Education for the Church of England Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales.

Yours sincerely

Suzanne Lithgow

Her Majesty's Inspector