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Kathryn McDonald  
Headteacher  
Bilsdale Midcable Chop Gate Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School  
Chop Gate  
Middlesbrough  
TS9 7JL

Dear Kathryn McDonald

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bilsdale Midcable Chop Gate Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 21 April 2016, 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 September 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 last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that pupils have routine opportunities to attempt challenging mathematical problems.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, two members of the governing body, the lead teacher, a representative of the local authority, a representative of the diocese and the national leader of education supporting the school, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I examined the school improvement plan and notes of visits made by the local authority and other partners. In addition, I reviewed documents relating to school governance and the headteacher's monitoring records.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection, a teacher has left the school, and the previous key stage 1 teacher, assisted by a higher level teaching assistant, is now teaching the two small classes together.

## **Main findings**

You have not shied away from difficult decisions since the last inspection, and along with the lead teacher have been relentless in your drive for improvement. You have been adept at channelling external support so that it is sharply tailored to the needs of the school. You have also secured additional support, independent of external partners, through effective networking.

Development planning is much improved. You have identified appropriate actions within a realistic timescale. The school improvement plan still needs sharpening further so that the intended impact of actions is made more explicit. This change would better support governors in shifting their emphasis from checking the implementation of actions to evaluating the difference the actions make to the learning and progress of pupils.

Governors, with the help of the local authority and diocese, have appointed you as the permanent headteacher to secure the longer term leadership of the school. The decision to separate the work of the two governing bodies in the confederation is enabling governors to shine a brighter light on the performance of each school. The information you are providing for governors is helping them to get a better handle on pupils' progress and attainment, so they are beginning to ask the right questions.

You are regularly checking on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Effective coaching of middle leaders within the confederation is building the confidence and skills of leaders to undertake their roles. Consequently, there is scope to increase leadership capacity by having subject leaders check on the quality of teaching across both schools.

Raised expectations of key stage 2 pupils can clearly be seen in the pupils' work books. The teacher is skilfully matching work to the different abilities of each pupil, including the most able. This has brought about an improvement in the rate of pupils' progress, which in some cases has been rapid. The quality of the adults' questioning is deepening pupils' thinking. Pupils are engaged and enjoying school, and behaviour is improving because of the increase in challenge and the relevant and stimulating curriculum.

Pupils are writing at length on a more regular basis and in other subjects in addition to English. This is enabling them to develop stamina and sustain quality throughout a piece of writing. Pupils need more routine opportunities to practise problem solving in mathematics lessons and other subjects.

### **External support**

The local authority and diocese have brokered effective support for leaders, governors and teachers that is helping the school to move forward. Specialist leaders from within the Swaledale Alliance have been effective, showing leaders within school how to check that teaching is having the intended impact on learning. These leaders check that advice is acted upon and is making a difference.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of York and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Philip Riozzi  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**