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Dear Mrs Trayner

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Accrington Woodnook Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 8 July 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 following 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 October 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At the 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 last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the quality of teaching in Year 3 is consistently good
- continue to develop the role of the governing body so that they offer the highest level of support and challenge to senior leaders
- develop the school's website by:
 - providing more detailed information on the curriculum that is being delivered to all pupils in the school
 - ensuring that the special educational needs reports evaluate the effectiveness of the provision made for pupils with special educational needs or a disability.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other members of the senior leadership team, a small number of governors and a group of pupils from Year 3 and Year 4. I also met with two local authority advisers to discuss the action taken since the last inspection and the level of support provided. The school's development plan was evaluated, alongside other documentation that you provided. Together we looked at examples of pupils' work and undertook a learning walk to observe teaching and learning across the school, particularly in upper key stage 1 and lower key stage 2.

Context

There have been a significant number of staff changes since the last inspection. A new chair of the governing body is in post and several new members have been appointed to ensure a balanced range of skills and experience.

Main findings

Immediately after the last inspection, you and senior leaders wasted no time in putting together an action plan to address the areas for improvement highlighted by the inspection. This action plan is coherent and identified a wide range of practical strategies to improve practice across the school, most notably in writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar. Milestones are realistic and linked clearly to specific outcomes for pupils. Lines of accountability are clear.

You are confident that most of the areas for improvement have been successfully addressed and I would agree. However, senior leaders do recognise that there are still some inconsistencies with regard to the quality of teaching in Year 3. You also acknowledge that governors do not sufficiently challenge the school leaders and hold them to account.

You, and senior leaders, monitor the quality of teaching with rigour. This is done through formal observations, learning walks, book scrutinies and reviews of planning. Documentation shows quite clearly that these checks are now more sharply focused on the progress that specific groups of pupils make, including the most able. Such good practice, together with targeted training for all staff, is helping raise standards across most areas of the school.

During our joint learning walk, we focused on how well writing is taught across the school and the level of challenge offered to pupils. In almost all classes, I observed questioning that was effective in developing and deepening pupils' understanding. Pupils' progress during lessons was very closely monitored by both teachers and teaching assistants. We both observed younger pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 produce good-quality extended pieces of writing about a production of *Wind in the Willows*, seen in school that morning. Pupils proudly read to me what they had written and they made

good use of their phonics knowledge to spell out unfamiliar words. Gentle reminders from teachers ensured that pupils checked their writing to ensure sentences were grammatically correct and made sense. Teachers monitor pupils' progress well during lessons while marking work in their presence. Marking is of high quality and focuses sharply on celebrating pupils' achievements. Next steps to improve their learning and spelling, punctuation and grammar are identified.

We both looked at work in pupils' books and agreed that pupils across most year groups are making good progress in many aspects of their learning and across subjects. Levels of presentation are very good. Children produce extended pieces of writing across a wide range of subjects. Most pupils are provided with activities that challenge and deepen their learning. However, such good practice is not yet consistently present in Year 3 where pupils are, at times, given work that does not challenge them to do their very best.

Pupils from Year 3 and Year 4 that I spoke to during the inspection are aware of the changes and improvements that you are trying to make. Without hesitation, pupils from Year 4 told me that the work is 'getting harder'. However, these sentiments are not shared consistently by pupils in Year 3. All pupils have a secure understanding of the school's marking policy and confirmed that their work is marked regularly and often. My discussions with pupils also highlighted that teachers place a strong emphasis on improving pupils' punctuation, spelling and grammar.

At the last inspection, inspectors commented that the school should improve communication with parents by providing them with the necessary information about their children's progress and attainment. I have reviewed the reports that are provided for parents at regular intervals throughout the year and I am of the opinion that these are detailed and informative. The final, end-of-year report clearly states whether pupils are above, in line with or below end-of-year expectations for English, mathematics and science. An evaluation of pupils' attendance is also given. I reviewed the school's most recent questionnaire to parents. This highlighted that the vast majority of parents agree that the school keeps them well informed about their children's progress.

Some governors, including the chair of the governing body, are new to their roles. They are undertaking training to help them develop their skills so that they can fulfil their roles and responsibilities. A review of governance has recently taken place and an action plan developed to address the issues raised. Governors are aware of the school's priorities and of the progress made by some groups of pupils. They have an understanding of how the pupil premium and sports premium money has been spent. Governors are clearly committed to driving forward improvements. They recognise the importance of developing their roles further so that they hold the school and its senior leaders to account more rigorously than previously.

The website is bright, colourful and easy to navigate. However, the information provided does not meet current guidelines. There is insufficient detail relating to the curriculum. The special educational needs report does not evaluate the effectiveness of the provision provided.

External support

The school is receiving good support from the local authority. Training and support have been provided to help staff develop their teaching skills across many aspects of the curriculum. They have also provided effective support and guidance in relation to governance, developing the roles of the senior leadership team and monitoring the quality of teaching across the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Iwaskow

Her Majesty's Inspector