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24 October 2016

Mrs Elisabeth Mellor  
Headteacher  
Kirk Hammerton Church of England Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Mellor

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kirk Hammerton Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 3 October 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 April 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in April 2016, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are not 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:

- urgently ensure that the school's improvement plans are focused precisely on actions to improve and how these improvements will be measured. They should encompass all of the areas for improvement from the section 5 inspection, and should include who will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions to inform future planning, and how this will be done

- swiftly agree and implement external support for teachers and leaders in line with actions identified in the school improvement plan
- develop and implement plans to improve pupils' writing, including how writing is to be improved in subjects other than English
- sharpen leaders' monitoring so that it is focused on key actions to improve
- ensure that teachers are planning and delivering lessons which challenge all pupils.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and other leaders, and representatives of the governing body including the current chair, to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection. In addition to this, I met with the school improvement partner from the local authority. The school improvement plans and the school's system for checking pupils' 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, consultation to federate formally with Staveley Primary School has been completed and this will commence from 3 November 2016. You started as new headteacher in September 2016, and you are the headteacher across both schools. Teachers in the early years and in key stage 2 have left, and two new teachers joined the school in September. One teacher is on secondment from Staveley Primary School and is currently the assistant headteacher. From 3 November 2016, there will only be one governing body for the two schools. Currently, there are still two separate governing bodies.

## **Main findings**

Leaders' plans for improvement are not focused precisely enough on the actions which are needed to improve the quality of teaching, learning and leadership. You have correctly identified this. We agree that the plans are not fit for purpose as they lack any real, measurable actions which will ensure that the school is on its journey to becoming a good school. The plans do not address all of the areas for improvement identified at the previous section 5 inspection. Success criteria are not measurable, and there are no mechanisms in place to identify who is monitoring and evaluating their effectiveness, or how this is going to be done. This means that governors have no way of holding leaders to account for improvements. This needs to be addressed urgently.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have not monitored the impact of their planned improvements closely enough. For example, a new marking and feedback

policy has been implemented. Leaders have yet to look at the impact of this. Work in books currently shows that this policy is not being applied consistently and is not having the desired impact on learning. Leaders should have spotted this earlier. Furthermore, a new presentation policy has been put in place. However, scrutiny of books during this monitoring inspection shows that not all teachers are following the guidelines. For example, dates are missing from pupils' work and some pupils have not used rulers.

During visits to lessons with you, it was clear that pupils are not being challenged at the appropriate level. Some pupils were being taught at a level which they found too difficult, and others found the tasks too easy. Teachers need training and guidance about how to do this, and therefore this needs to be reflected in the school improvement plans.

There have not been sufficient professional development opportunities for teachers and subject leaders to improve their practice. Teachers have not had training to improve how they teach writing. In addition, they have had no guidance or support about how to ensure that there are more opportunities for writing across other subjects. There is a lack of urgency surrounding this. There have been recent discussions, but no concrete actions to support the improvement needed in this area. Also, subject leaders and middle leaders have had no support to develop their roles, yet they are expected to put key improvements in place. The school improvement plan must ensure that training requirements for teachers and middle leaders are given the utmost priority.

Leaders' actions to ensure that pupils' experience of life in modern Britain and understanding of British values are extended to reflect its richness and diversity are weak. This key area for improvement has not been addressed at all during the summer term, and plans are only just starting to be developed now. This slow start has meant that pupils are not yet having opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding in this area.

Governors have not been challenging enough when asking leaders about the impact of their actions. They ask relevant questions, but do not always get the answers they should be getting.

As a result of improvement plans not being fit for purpose, monitoring not being precise enough, training opportunities not being in place quickly enough for staff, and policies not being applied consistently, pupils are not making the rapid progress that they need to be making.

### **External support**

The local authority has not kept a close enough check on the development of the improvement plans for this academic year, which were devised during the summer term. This has resulted in officers not being fully aware that the plans were not

good enough. Consequently, support provided has had limited impact as it has not been focused in the areas which would have the most effect.

The local authority has brokered support with the North Star Teaching School Alliance to improve the quality of leadership and teaching. However, this support is not yet in place, despite the previous inspection taking place nearly six months ago. The support plan is still not yet finalised.

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

Yours sincerely

Suzanne Lithgow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**