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Mrs Lisa Jackson-Ward
Ripley Endowed Church of England School
Ripley
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Dear Mrs Jackson-Ward

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ripley Endowed Church of England School

Following my visit to your school on 19 September 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring 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 monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in June 2017, 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 for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- rapidly improve the quality of teaching and raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should achieve
- increase the level of challenge in lessons so that more pupils, especially the most able, achieve a greater depth of understanding
- ensure that governors challenge leaders effectively by checking more precisely the effect of leaders' actions to improve teaching and pupils' progress
- improve the skills of middle leaders so that they are fully accountable for raising standards.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and your assistant headteacher. I held a telephone conversation with the former local authority primary adviser and the new local authority primary adviser. I met with the deputy director of education for the Diocese of Leeds. I examined a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation records, assessment information, governing body minutes and attendance and behaviour records. I met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. I scrutinised a sample of pupils' work with the senior teacher who has responsibility for English. I met with the early years leader. I visited all classes. I met with a group of pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6. I also talked to some parents at the end of the school day.

Context

The school has had three headteachers since the previous inspection in June 2017. At the time of this inspection you and the assistant headteacher had been in post for two weeks. In September 2018, the school established a collaborative arrangement with Kettlesing Felliscliffe Community Primary School and Beckwithsaw Community Primary School. Senior leadership is shared across the three schools. The Diocese of Leeds and the local authority are currently in the process of exploring a formal federation between the three schools.

A new teacher for the Year 3 and Year 4 class and a new early years leader have been appointed since the previous inspection.

Main findings

Areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report have not been tackled effectively. The pace of change has been too slow. Many of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection remain main priorities for the school. Largely as a result of the instability in leadership, progress towards becoming a good school has been hindered.

You and your assistant headteacher have very quickly identified what needs to be done to improve the school. You have a thorough understanding of the fundamental actions needed, including the need to accelerate the pace of improvement. You have already made a start at improving the school's assessment systems to ensure that teachers' assessment of pupils' work is more accurate.

Following the previous inspection, improvement plans were revised. These plans are aligned to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. However, actions in improvement plans are not judged against how these actions are improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. It is not clear from improvement plans who will check and who will evaluate the impact of actions.

Governors do not challenge leaders sufficiently. For example, governors do not systematically check that leaders' actions are improving the quality of teaching. Governors are too accepting of what leaders tell them. As a result, governors did not anticipate the decline in outcomes for Year 6 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2018 national tests.

Provisional outcomes for 2018 indicate that Year 6 pupils did not make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average and a decline compared to 2017. No pupils in Year 6 achieved the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined. Too many pupils do not make good progress from their different starting points.

Pupils' presentation and handwriting have improved since the previous inspection. However, teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are not high enough. There is not a consistently effective approach to the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Although teachers now address pupils' misconceptions more effectively, teachers do not routinely check that pupils act on the advice they are given to improve their work. Consequently, gaps in pupils' learning remain.

Writing across the wider curriculum is not well developed. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English. Pupils' attainment in writing has declined in key stages 1 and 2 since the previous inspection. Middle leaders are aware that the teaching of writing needs to improve. However, they do not sufficiently check if actions to improve teaching are effective.

Early years provision has improved since the previous inspection. The early years leader has a good understanding of the strengths of early years provision and the areas in need of further development. For example, the early years leader recognises the need to improve additional adults' questioning skills further. There are more opportunities for children to develop their language and number skills in both the outdoors and indoor areas. There are increasing opportunities for children to develop their early writing and 'mark-making' skills within free-choice activities. Children are more engaged in their learning. Communication with parents has also improved since the previous inspection. As a result of more effective early years provision, a higher proportion of children are achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception.

Records are kept of any pupil welfare concerns or behaviour incidents. However, you acknowledge that record keeping needs to ensure that all follow-up actions are recorded. You accept that trends are not fully evaluated so that leaders and governors can regularly review the effectiveness of the school's procedures.

The pupils I met with told me that they are proud of their school and they enjoy coming to school. The parents I talked to expressed concern about staffing turbulence in recent years. However, they said that despite the number of changes

to staffing, the school has maintained its caring ethos and family atmosphere.

External support

Since the previous inspection, the local authority has provided a range of support to the school. Local authority reports and reviews are detailed and highlight the weaknesses in provision. However, this support has not led to marked improvements in the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. The support provided by the local authority in the early years is leading to improvements in the quality of provision. As a result of declining pupil outcomes in 2018, the local authority plans to provide additional support to the school. The local authority and the diocese have worked in partnership to find a long-term solution to the instability in leadership. As a result, formal federation is currently being explored.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the 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

Michele Costello
Her Majesty's Inspector