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11 December 2012

Mr M Foxwell
Levens CofE Primary School
Church Road
Levens, Kendal
Cumbria
LA8 8PU

Dear Mr Foxwell

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Levens CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 11 December, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and senior teacher, representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a group of pupils. A range of documentation, including the school improvement plan was evaluated. Performance management and NQT induction plans were discussed.

Context

Since the recent inspection, one new teaching assistant has been appointed. There have been no other significant changes to the school.

Main findings

School leaders have drawn up an action plan that is well organised and addresses fully all the areas for improvement identified at the inspection. The plan specifies appropriate actions together with a realistic timescale for review. However, some success criteria could be more precisely quantified so that review can be sharper.

Monitoring the progress against the plan relies heavily on the headteacher's reports to the governing body. Governors accept the need to develop their monitoring role further. They are taking the initiative to build their expertise in order to challenge and support school leaders more effectively. They have developed links between individual governors and members of staff and have arranged training in analysing the school's data on pupils' attainment and progress. The curriculum committee has been strengthened with a new chair to this committee.

Since the October inspection, the school has rearranged phonics teaching to ensure that all pupils have access to the support they need. Pupils recognise a greater emphasis being placed on the presentation of their work and think that their writing has improved as a result. All staff have participated in training on the use of assessment information to plan more challenging activities.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommends that further action is taken to:

- refine the action plan to include specific measurable success criteria and identify how progress towards them will be monitored
- develop a brief action plan for governors identifying their role in monitoring pupils' progress and progress against the action plan.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has provided considerable support to the school during the last year and continues to do so. Local authority officers have advised on the action plan and led professional development for staff, which is helping to improve the quality of teaching. They have been instrumental in facilitating links with other local schools and a Local Leader of Education so that leaders and teachers can see successful practice elsewhere. They recognise the need to tailor future professional development to enable staff, particularly the newly qualified teachers, to work with colleagues in other schools.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cumbria and as below.

Yours sincerely

Jean Kendall

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority
- the academy chain where relevant
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.