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Mr Trevor Smith
Headteacher
Chapel-en-le-Frith CofE (Controlled) Primary School
Warmbrook Road
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Dear Mr Smith

Special measures monitoring inspection of Chapel-en-le-Frith CofE VC Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 14 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2013.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, a group of subject leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated. I talked informally to pupils as I visited each class.

Context

No significant changes have taken place in the school since the October inspection.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Senior leaders have acted quickly to put plans in place to begin to address the issues identified in the recent inspection. Improvement plans are correctly focused on raising pupils' achievement rapidly. However, the plans do not clearly identify who will check the impact of the school's actions on improving pupils' progress. Governors' systems for checking how well the school is doing are not sharp enough to gauge how much progress is being made by the school's leaders on improving the quality of teaching.

It is clear that both the senior leaders and the middle leaders who are responsible for managing subjects are determined to bring about the necessary improvements quickly. Middle leaders check how well pupils are doing by scrutinising teachers' planning to see if it is sufficiently challenging for all pupils. They are also diligent in checking the quality of pupils' work in their books. However, they are not yet all fully engaged in judging the quality of teaching and learning through direct observations of lessons. Consequently, they are not able to fully hold teachers to account for achievements in their subjects. Senior leaders have set ambitious targets for school improvement. However, these targets do not focus enough on the progress of different groups of pupils.

Governors have begun to address the issues identified in the October inspection. They identified, and are working with a national leader of governance (NLG) to identify the skills they have and the training they need to better fulfil their role. Governors understand that they are not using data well enough yet in order to challenge school leaders, and have identified a number of strategies to find out information for themselves about how well pupils are doing. They are becoming less reliant on the school's leaders to give them the information they need in order to hold them to account more fully. Governors visit school regularly and are beginning to ask more challenging questions about pupils' progress because they have a growing understanding of data on how well pupils are doing compared to similar schools nationally.

Since the school was placed in special measures, the local authority has acted quickly to devise a plan that gives clear direction for school improvement. It was aware that the school needed improvement prior to the inspection in October 2013 but did not consider at that time that the school was at risk of going into special measures. It supported the governing body to identify a NLG to carry out an external review of its work. The school adviser has been working with the school to analyse data on pupils' achievement more efficiently. The local authority has also led training on improving the quality of teaching.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Director of Children's Services for Derbyshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jan Connor

Her Majesty's Inspector