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24 April 2015

Mr Alan Beedie
Headteacher
Horwich Parish CofE Primary School
Church Street
Horwich
Bolton
Lancashire
BL6 6AA

Dear Mr Beedie

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Horwich Parish CofE Primary School, Bolton

Following my visit to your school on 23 April 2015, 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 February 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and your deputy headteacher. I also met with three representatives of the governing body and with an adviser from the local authority and from the diocese. I conducted a tour of the school, visiting each class and spoke informally to some pupils about their work. I scrutinised a range of documentation which included your school improvement plan. I also looked at a sample of pupils' work and records of meetings held by governors and with the local authority.

Context

One new parent governor has been appointed since the section 5 inspection.

Main findings

You have wasted no time in acting on the findings from your inspection in February. You have immediately reviewed how frequently you collect information on pupils' progress and sharpened the focus of those meetings where you discuss this information with teachers. This has enabled all staff to quickly identify pupils in need of additional support. Additionally, you have increased the amount of monitoring activity you undertake in order to check on improvements to teaching. This is now better focussed. It identifies the training and support individual teachers need, and you have deployed your subject leaders to provide this to them. Pupil workbooks show that this has been instrumental in ensuring staff now consistently follow the new feedback and marking policy, and in ensuring that the amount and quality of pupils' work is improving.

Your plan for improvement is strong. It correctly identifies immediate priorities and sets out clear, measurable criteria against which you can check if the actions you take are effective. It would be helpful to include more milestones by which all leaders can be assured that things are moving in the right direction. You have carefully outlined how you will draw on external support to confirm that you are making the changes you need. This will help to ensure that your own evaluation of improvements is accurate.

Governors are prepared to take whatever action is necessary in order for the school to be judged as 'good' again at its next inspection. Meeting records show that they are conscientious in questioning the reports you present to them. These reflect an unremitting focus on outcomes for pupils. Governors rightly identify that they need to work with you to examine the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team. This, combined with training and support, is essential in order to ensure that all leaders are fully effective. Governors have already commissioned an external review of their effectiveness. At this time of this inspection, the report on this had not yet been received. However, they are fully committed to acting on its findings.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

Bolton local authority has prioritised support to the school and has established a collaborative working group, which will monitor school improvement and coordinate any support that you may need. Advisers have worked with you and your senior team to observe teaching. From this, they have identified that you need additional

support and guidance in order to operate most effectively. The local authority has sought this support from a partner school, although this is not yet in place.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Bolton and to the Director of Education for the Diocese of Manchester.

Yours sincerely

Philippa Darley

Her Majesty's Inspector