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Mr Harvey McCarthy  
Headteacher  
Filey Junior School  
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North Yorkshire  
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Dear Mr McCarthy

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Filey Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 7 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 March 2016. 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 last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure tasks in mathematics provide pupils with the right degree of challenge to deepen their understanding
- refine the success criteria in development plans and establish key milestones so that the school's progress can be monitored more easily
- extend the analysis of pupils' performance information so that the progress of groups with different starting points can be tracked accurately.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders, the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also spoke with a group of pupils. We made a series of short visits to lessons where I spoke to pupils about their work. I also looked at a sample of pupils' work in books. The school development plans were evaluated and I scrutinised a range of documents relating to the school's work.

## **Context**

Since the inspection in March, one teacher has left the school and two new teachers have joined. Pupils in Year 6 are being taught in three classes. Since September, other senior leaders and the leader of literacy have had additional time out of class to carry out their leadership role. Teachers in each year group now plan together weekly. The school is being supported by the Ebor Teaching Schools Alliance. The school is currently consulting on a proposal to join the Ebor Academy Trust.

## **Main findings**

While you, other leaders and governors were initially shocked by the inspection judgement, no time has been wasted in setting about tackling the areas for improvement. Development plans set out appropriate actions to address the areas for improvement identified, and there are already signs of a positive impact in many aspects of the school's work. However, some success criteria are imprecise and there are no milestones to help check that the school's progress is on track. Governors have been effective in supporting the school's improvement and continue to challenge where needed. New governors have brought valuable additional skills. You recognise that training on new performance measures remains a priority to ensure that all those involved with the school can judge its performance accurately relative to the national picture.

You and other leaders have a much deeper understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school, and there is much sharper focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Increased time for leaders to support staff in developing their skills is paying dividends. Through joint planning, team teaching, modelling and coaching, teachers are being helped effectively to improve their practice. Opportunities for teachers to observe best practice in other schools is also enabling them to further develop their classroom skills.

Teachers are very positive about the time they have to plan collaboratively with other teachers in their year group. This is ensuring more consistent expectations of what pupils should achieve between classes, and is allowing teachers to share ideas and effective approaches. Less experienced leaders are being supported effectively to improve their leadership skills by more experienced colleagues, involvement in local networks and opportunities to work alongside leaders in other schools. As a result, middle leaders are contributing more effectively to staff development and the evaluation of the impact of actions taken to improve the school.

Systems to assess and track pupils' progress are more secure than at the time of the last inspection. As a result, leaders can identify how well individuals and most different groups of pupils are doing, so action can be taken to help those who are at risk of falling behind. However, there is not a clear enough focus on pupils' progress relative to their different starting points, such as the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils.

The impact of whole-staff training on the teaching of handwriting, combined with higher expectations of how pupils will present their work is evident in pupils' books. Pupils explained how the 'line of expectation' and their response to individual feedback were helping to improve their handwriting. There are more opportunities for pupils to write at length in their literacy books and in other subjects. This is helping to increase their confidence.

Following the results of the Year 6 national tests in 2016, there has been a much sharper focus on the teaching of reading. Pupils have more frequent opportunities to read in school and are guided more effectively to choose a book that is matched to their needs. New resources have ensured that pupils also have access to a wider range of texts. Teachers are becoming more skilful in their use of assessment to identify the specific reading skills that pupils need to develop. Guided reading sessions are better structured and the quality of teachers' questioning has been improved, so pupils' knowledge and understanding of a text are probed in more depth.

Work is continuing to develop teachers' expertise in teaching the new mathematics curriculum. The in-house numeracy development team and links with a local mathematics hub are being used well to support teachers to better structure pupils' learning in mathematics. Pupils' work shows while there are opportunities for pupils to develop their fluency and reasoning skills, some tasks do not provide sufficient challenge.

## **External support**

The local authority has successfully brokered a package of support from the Ebor Teaching Schools Alliance. Although still quite early days, school leaders and staff are positive about the impact of this support and the benefits of observing and working alongside teachers and leaders from other schools. Local networks are also being used more effectively to support the school's improvement.

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

Katrina Gueli  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**