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26 September 2014

Ms Jo McDonough  
Acting Headteacher  
Dundry Church of England Primary School  
110 Dundry Lane  
Bristol  
BS41 8JE

Dear Ms McDonough

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Dundry Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 26 September 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 2014. 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. The school should take further action to:

- strengthen the school action plan by clarifying arrangements for evaluating the impact of all actions taken to improve the school
- ensure teachers receive training to be able to accurately judge the progress pupils are making in English and mathematics.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the subject leader for mathematics, three members of the Interim Executive Board, and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I undertook a 'focused tour' of the school, looked at a range of pupils' English and mathematics books and teachers' planning. I held discussions informally with pupils and staff. I evaluated the school improvement plan.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection the headteacher has left the school. In the headteacher's absence, you as deputy headteacher have been acting headteacher from the start of this term. A newly qualified teacher joined the school this week to teach in a mixed-age Year 2 and 3 class. An Interim Executive Board is now in place and has replaced the governing body. The bursar left the school in July 2014. Her successor will be joining the school in October.

## **Main findings**

You have taken up the challenge of leading the school with energy and commitment. You have quickly gained the confidence and support of the community, staff, governors and local authority. They share your determination to improve the school and raise pupils' achievement. Teachers are clear about what is expected. They understand the urgent need for all groups of pupils to make better progress. You are using the inspection points for improvement to drive your school action plan. However, there is a lack of clarity about who will evaluate the impact of each action and how this will be done.

Leaders are focusing on ensuring teachers carefully plan lessons to match pupils' different abilities in the mixed-age classes. You are supporting teachers to 'lift the lid on learning'. Teachers are planning together to gain confidence in adjusting activities to suit individual needs. They are now challenging pupils and planning more appropriate work, particularly for the most-able pupils. As a result, a higher proportion of pupils are on track to reach the higher levels, in reading, writing and mathematics.

You have strengthened arrangements for checking the quality of teaching. Leaders visit lessons regularly and scrutinise work in pupils' books. Teachers use improvement points from these visits to develop their practice. All inadequate teaching has been eliminated since the inspection. You are paying much closer attention to the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils. This means disadvantaged pupils often achieve as well as their peers, and in some cases better.

All teachers use the marking and feedback policy consistently, including those new to the school. Teachers mark books frequently and provide clear improvement points to pupils. Pupils have time to respond to these comments which is helping them improve their work. Pupils typically say, 'marking helps us learn well'. For example, work in books shows teachers have higher expectations. The quality of extended writing is improving and teachers are expecting more from their pupils.

Subject leaders have made improvements to the way their subjects are taught. For example, the school has reviewed the way they teach calculation skills. Teachers have attended training to increase their understanding of how children develop mathematical skills. As a result, pupils are solving calculation problems which provide stretch and challenge with increasing confidence and accuracy.

Members of the newly established Interim Executive Board have got off to a good start in beginning their work to improve the school. They are determined to drive forward a more rapid pace of change in order to be a good school. They know they cannot 'take their foot off the pedal' and are committed to rigorously evaluating the impact of all actions taken. They have quickly clarified their roles and responsibilities and are using their relevant skills, to provide challenge and support to leaders. They agree that a sharper action plan will help to measure improvement. However, it is too soon to see the impact of their work.

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

### **External support**

The local authority knows the school well and agrees the school must improve rapidly. Following the inspection, they provided immediate and high quality support to improve the quality of education. They check frequently that actions taken are improving the school. The school adviser is providing effective support to enable you to develop the range of skills you need to lead and manage the school successfully. In addition, the local authority has arranged for you to work with an experienced headteacher to train teachers to assess pupils' work accurately. You and the local authority adviser agree this is an area for development.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body the Director of Children's Services for North Somerset and the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Leahy  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**