

### **Note of Visit: Brackensdale Junior School**

The visit to the school on 5 November 2013 was arranged following a complaint which had been made against the school. The visit enabled HMI to gather information in the areas relating to the complaint. The visit also provided an opportunity to consider the extent to which the school is addressing the issues identified for improvement at the last section 5 inspection, following an initial visit on 15 July 2013.

During the visit, I held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. I considered documentation relating to the monitoring of teaching and learning, as well as the school's most recent data on the attendance and achievement of pupils. I evaluated the school improvement plan. I conducted a tour of the school with the headteacher. I observed three lessons taught by three different teachers. I looked at samples of pupils' work and considered the quality of marking. I looked at documentation relating to the use of funds to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. I visited the specially resourced provision for pupils who display autism.

Since the last visit, the support which the headteacher provided to another school in his role as Local Leader of Education has ended.

Since the last visit, the governing body has appointed an experienced teacher who teachers a mixed-age Year 5 and Year 6 class. She commenced her role in September 2013 following the retirement of the previous post-holder.

Since the last visit, senior leaders have reviewed their approach to providing feedback to pupils about their work, in line with the recently introduced approach to marking. Teachers are providing pupils with more detailed feedback about their work, particularly in writing. This is helping pupils to know precisely what they need to do next to improve their work. As a result, pupils are making better rates of progress both in their writing books as well as when they write about a range of different subject. The quality of marking in mathematics varies between classes because pupils are not always provided with opportunities to show how they have corrected or improved their work.

The introduction of a half-termly assessment is helping senior leaders to identify pupils who are falling behind. As a result, programmes of support are being implemented more quickly. This has helped those pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs. The school's tracking reveals that there is a need to continue to accelerate the progress of pupils who do not have special educational needs, especially in Year 6, and particularly in reading and writing.

Pupils' mathematics and topic books show that pupils are being provided with more opportunities in which to apply their skills in numeracy in other subjects.

Senior leaders are working more closely with parents in order to reduce persistent absence. Consequently, there has been a reduction in the number of sessions missed by the vast majority of pupils who were persistently absent during the previous year.

Visits to lessons showed that teachers are using assessment information more accurately to ensure that the needs of different pupils are being met. The most able pupils are being provided with more challenging work and this is helping them to make faster rates of progress.

Plans for improvement have been improved. As well as identifying appropriate actions for improvement, the plans now contain success criteria linked to pupils' progress and attainment. These have been incorporated into teachers' performance management targets. Although this will help governors to check whether your actions have been successful at the end of the year, the plan does not contain milestones, so that governors can check that that the school is on track to reach its performance targets.

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

Although it is clear that since the previous visit, senior leaders and governors are taking effective to secure improvements, there are areas which require immediate attention. Consequently, I recommend that prior to the next visit, senior leaders should:

- refine the school improvement plan further by including milestones, so that governors and senior leaders can check that their actions are ensuring that the school is on track to reach their targets which have been set for the achievement of pupils
- make sure that pupils receive the same quality of feedback in mathematics as they do in writing
- ensure that pupils in Year 6 who do not have special educational needs, make faster progress in order to address prior underachievement in reading and writing.

A letter will be sent in due course regarding to the complaint made against the school.

David Carter  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**