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17 June 2013

Sarah Chaloner
Headteacher
Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School
Longlands Close
Crossbrook Street
Waltham Cross
EN8 8LU

Dear Ms Chaloner

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 17 June 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings of my visit. 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 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor to discuss the actions being taken to improve the school. A meeting was also held with a group of Year 6 pupils. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. I scrutinised a range of documents and you joined me on brief visits to all classes.

Context

A new member has been appointed to the governing body, who is the headteacher of a local school. Four members of staff, including the deputy headteacher, will leave at the end of the summer term 2013. Three new teachers have been appointed and they will also start working at the school in September 2013. One of these will be an acting deputy headteacher who will also provide leadership for mathematics. The

school will also have support from a National Leader of Education from the start of the new academic year.

Main findings

You and representatives of the governing body are showing determination to raise standards and improve pupils' achievement so that these are at least good. You, together with other senior leaders are responding well to weaknesses in pupils' progress with urgency. The latest information shows that pupils are making better progress in writing and mathematics than they were at the time of the previous inspection. The school has used support from the local authority to make sure that the checks made on pupils' progress in writing and mathematics are reliable. When observing teachers and reviewing pupils' work, you and other senior leaders focus on the impact teachers are having on pupils' learning, but not sufficiently well enough on how different groups are doing, for example whether the work for more-able pupils is too easy and whether it is too difficult for those who need extra help.

Teachers are beginning to give pupils the opportunity to develop their mathematical skills through more practical and interesting activities. The ideas and resources used by the 'mathematics wizard' (a consultant who came for two days to work with different groups of pupils) are now being used by teachers to make learning lively for pupils. You are making sure that there is a greater push by teachers on developing pupils' writing so that it shows better punctuation, accuracy and presentation. Leadership meetings to review how well pupils' are progressing are now more frequent, with teachers being held to account for pupils' progress. Leaders do not yet make a close link between information about pupils' progress and feedback to teachers from lesson observations, particularly in regard to the progress of different groups of pupils.

Governors meet regularly to discuss the progress of pupils. They have a secure understanding of teachers' performance. They have asked for further training and a less complex presentation of progress data to enable them to ask even more searching questions about the progress of different groups of pupils and to check that senior leaders are helping all pupils to make better progress.

The school improvement plan clearly deals with all of the areas identified in the last inspection. There are some suitable, measurable success criteria to help check how well staff are implementing key actions and their impact on pupils' achievement. However, the plan does not refer clearly enough to the proportions of pupils who are capable of making better than expected progress.

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:

- make sure that leaders' observations of lessons and feedback to teachers pays particular attention to how well or not different groups of pupils are making progress
- make sure that governors receive uncomplicated information about the progress made by different groups of pupils so that they can check more deeply the impact senior leaders and teachers are having on pupils' achievement
- ensure the school improvement plan identifies the proportion of pupils who will be making better than expected progress.

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

Local authority advisers have provided you, other senior leaders, governors and teachers with helpful support and advice. Teachers have also had the opportunity to visit another school and observe how successfully teachers develop pupils' writing skills. The impact of this work, and that of the training provided for mathematics, is showing improvement in pupils' progress from their starting points.

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

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The lead inspector.