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Mrs Suzanne Edmondson
Headteacher
St Patrick's CofE School
Endmoor
Kendal
Cumbria
LA8 0HH

Dear Mrs Edmondson

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Patrick's CofE School

Following my visit to your school on 15 January 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders, governors, a group of pupils and a representative of the local authority (LA). The inspector evaluated a range of documentation including: the school improvement plan; monitoring reports and records of lesson observations. In addition, the headteacher took the HMI on a tour of the school to look briefly at teaching and learning and the changes made to provision since the last inspection.

Context

There have been no significant changes to staff or the school's organisation since the inspection.

Main findings

Following the inspection in November senior leaders and governors have reacted positively to the areas for improvement and have accepted that the priorities identified are the right ones for the school. As a group, they have responded with suitable urgency and have taken immediate action to accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics and establish a more

rigorous system for monitoring the quality of teaching.

The school improvement plan has been realigned and suitably revised. Clear priorities are in place to drive the school forward. However, some of the targets for improvement are not as sharp as they could be. Planned actions do not have clear milestones or success criteria against which the impact of actions can be systematically monitored and evaluated. This makes it difficult for leaders and governors to judge how well the school is improving over-time.

Systems to check more rigorously on teaching and learning are gathering pace. Senior leaders are regularly checking on the quality of teaching and how well teachers use information to plan work at the right level for each child. Teachers are provided with clear pointers for improvement as required. However, further improvements are needed in how senior leaders make judgements on the achievement of pupils in lessons and in pinpointing with precision the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.

Senior leaders are not complacent and correctly recognise that the next challenge is to press on with their plans to strengthen the accuracy of the judgements teachers make on how well pupils' achieve and to establish clear expectations of pupils' progress.

Governors are committed to see the school improve and are aware of the reasons why the school is not yet good. Increasingly, they are more familiar of what goes on in school and the links between pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. There is still further work to be done to increase their confidence to act as a critical friend to the school and hold senior leaders to account.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- sharpen measurable success criteria and targets in the school improvement plan
- improve records of lesson observations by identifying more clearly the achievement of pupils and groups of pupils in lessons.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The support from the LA is well tailored to the school's priorities. The school has been linked with a leading teacher of mathematics and a local leader of education. This is helping to improve the quality of teaching and strengthen leadership. In addition, partnerships with a number of local schools are providing teachers with regular opportunities to observe good practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood

Her Majesty's Inspector