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6 February 2013

Mrs I Kirby
Headteacher
St Paul's CofE (C) First School
School Lane
Coven
Wolverhampton
WV9 5AD

Dear Mrs Kirby

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Paul's CofE (C) First School, Coven, Wolverhampton.

Following my visit to your school on 5 February 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 on 27 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and another senior leader, members of the governing body, a local leader of education who is working with the school, a representative of the local authority and a group of Year 4 pupils. The school action plan was evaluated.

Context

At the end of December a teacher left the school and as a result the staffing structure of the school has been reorganised.

Main findings

Senior leaders have written an action plan to meet the areas for improvement in the inspection report. This is a good plan and should lead to the necessary improvement. The plan makes clear the actions to be taken, their objective and rationale, the timescale for each action and the member of staff responsible. The plan is supported by success criteria that show what will be different as a result of the actions taken. The plan does not, however, contain any interim targets or milestones. This makes it harder for senior leaders and the governing body to assess the success of the plan at an earlier stage.

The governing body responded quickly to the inspection report. It established a task group to monitor the implementation of the plan and this group meets regularly. The group is monitoring the progress of pupils with increasing confidence. The governing body has also arranged training for its members, and the local authority is planning training for the governing body as a whole that will result in an action plan for further improvement. The governing body has reviewed its approach to the management of the performance of staff and has ensured that this is sharper and more robust. The governing body continues to evaluate the spending of the school's budget, including the use of Pupil Premium funding.

Senior leaders have already implemented parts of the inspection report's recommendations. Pupils described practical areas of mathematics that they have covered within mathematics and other subjects. They also described aspects of marking that have helped them to improve. Subject leaders have had opportunities to monitor their subjects. Pupil progress data is much better organised and is providing much better quality information to monitor pupils' progress. Opportunities have been arranged for teachers to visit other schools and receive support in school from local authority advisers.

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:

- add interim targets into the plan so that senior leaders and governors can assess the impact of the plan before the end of the academic year;
- review the impact of external support at an appropriate time.

HMI has provided the school with information on two good practice case studies on raising standards in primary mathematics.

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

External support

The school has received high quality support from a local leader of education as part of the support from the local authority. Some more of her support is planned, as is support from the local authority's mathematics adviser and the governor services section of the local authority. Visits are planned to local schools to observe aspects of practice. Once this programme of support is complete, school leaders and governors will be in a position to evaluate the impact of the support and decide if any further external support is needed.

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

Yours sincerely

Robert Barbour
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