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20 March 2013

Mr Darren Dudman
Headteacher
Ripon Cathedral C of E School
Priest Lane
Ripon
North Yorkshire
HG4 1LT

Dear Mr Dudman

Special measures monitoring inspection of Ripon Cathedral Church of England School

Following my visit to your school on 19 March 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 2012.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, the Chair and five members of the Governing Body and two representatives of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the December inspection, three governors have been appointed. In February 2013, the acting Chair of the Governing Body was confirmed as the substantive Chair. One member of staff has left and their class is being taught by a temporary

teacher; two other teachers will leave at the end of March 2013. Three teachers have been appointed and will take up their posts at the start of the summer term.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

A comprehensive action plan has been written which indicates the actions to be taken to improve provision in each of the four key areas identified at the December inspection. Dates for when monitoring will take place are provided and the persons responsible for checking that this will happen and what is still to be done, are indicated. Lesson observations, looking at pupils' work books and meeting to check whether pupils are being given their correct levels are providing leaders with a clear understanding of how well pupils are doing.

The Education Development Adviser (EDA) from the local authority, together with subject consultants, works closely with leaders and teachers. Staff are clear how to review the progress of the pupils in their class and then share their findings with senior leaders. This, together with a more rigorous performance management system to ensure that teachers reach their targets, is helping to strengthen accountability but it is too early to judge the impact of this work.

The school's action plan and the plan written by the local authority have similar success criteria but often these are too general and need to be specific. For example, seeing if interventions have improved the progress made by pupils is not measurable. Consequently, leaders, governors and external reviewers gain a limited view of improvements.

The professional expertise and educational experience of the newly appointed governors has increased the degree of challenge to leaders. They are involved in the work of the school and understand the need to make rapid and sustained improvements. Members of the governing body have close links with parents. The 'Update to Parents' document is a positive indication that governors want parents to be involved in and know about the school.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

Both plans would benefit from strengthening. Neither indicates regular intermediate milestones that can be used by those responsible for evaluating so that they can check whether enough progress is being made by all groups of pupils.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young
Her Majesty's Inspector