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30 April 2013

Mrs Karen Foster
Interim Headteacher
The Gonerby Hill Foot Church of England Primary School
Gonerby Hill Foot
Grantham
NG31 8HQ

Dear Mrs Foster

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to The Gonerby Hill Foot Church of England Primary School, Lincolnshire local authority.

Following my visit to your school on 29 April 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit I met with you, the Chair and other members of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. I also spoke to the substantive headteacher by telephone. I evaluated the school improvement plan and a range of school documentation. This included the school self-evaluation form, data relating to pupils' attainment and progress and the analysis of that data as well as minutes of recent governing body meetings. You took me on a tour of the school and we made brief visits to all classes.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has taken maternity leave and you have been appointed to cover her absence. A new post of assistant headteacher has been created which will be filled in September 2013. The leaders of literacy and

mathematics have been allocated new roles and responsibilities and given additional time to fulfil them. Two class teachers have left the school and have been replaced temporarily until the end of the summer term. Permanent appointments have been made and new staff will take up their posts in September 2013.

Main findings

My visit coincided with the start of your appointment as interim headteacher. During the visit we worked together to consider and identify the reasons why the school is not yet good. We agreed that accelerating the pace of learning in lessons is key, particularly in mathematics.

Much has happened since the inspection in January. A school improvement plan has been redrafted which includes the actions required to address the three recommendations identified in the report. Many of these actions are underway. These include staff training to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Targets have been re-set to become more ambitious. Close monitoring of progress towards these targets is now carried out to make sure that pupils are challenged and action taken to prevent any from falling behind. Subject leaders of literacy and mathematics have gained in confidence and skills and are taking greater responsibility for driving improvement as a result of coaching and mentoring.

Minor adjustments to planning and recording are required. Some targets in the school improvement plan are too vague. More precise targets will make it easier for senior leaders and governors to measure overall progress more accurately. Evaluations of the quality of learning require improvement because the observation process does not take enough account of the pupils' progress in lessons. This makes it difficult for you to know if there is sufficient learning happening in each lesson to generate the good progress that is required. The objectives for each lesson need to be refined to identify exactly what it is that the pupils are to learn or improve upon. Tasks should be clearly matched to pupils' learning needs and their next steps in learning.

Governors receive regular information on all aspects of the school's work and know the school better than previously. Evaluations of the school's performance are accurate and honest. Following advice, training and support, governors are clear about what requires improvement and how this is to be achieved. Most importantly, the governors have a better understanding of how well teachers are doing in terms of the progress that their pupils make.

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, I recommend that further action is taken to:

- ensure targets in the school improvement plan are clear and measurable so that progress can be monitored more accurately

- accelerate progress in lessons by planning and sharing learning objectives that are precisely matched to the next steps in pupils' learning
- maintain a tight focus on evaluating pupils' learning when observing lessons.
- consolidate the role of subject leaders so that responsibilities for securing further improvement are shared more widely

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

External support

The school draws on the local authority for external support in a number of ways. The local authority was quick to provide an interim headteacher with the experience and skills needed to continue to move the school forward while the headteacher is away on maternity leave. The School Improvement Partner provides a useful external view on the quality of the school's provision and outcomes. She has also carried out some invaluable work with governors to help them to understand the recommendations from the recent inspection, how to monitor the school and measure the progress being made. Literacy and numeracy consultants are providing on-going support to subject leaders in order to develop their leadership and management skills further.

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

Yours sincerely

Trevor Riddiough
Her Majesty's Inspector