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Mrs Jayne Boaler
Headteacher
Tickhill St Mary's Church of England Primary and Nursery School
St Mary's Road
Tickhill
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN11 9LZ

Dear Mrs Boaler

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Tickhill St Mary's Church of England Primary and Nursery School, Doncaster

Following my visit to your school on 10 May 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 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement and action plans were evaluated.

Context

Since the previous inspection, additional staff have been appointed on a temporary basis to support the school's improvement. An experienced ex-headteacher is working five days per week, two days in a teaching role and three days in a senior leader role. An advanced skills teacher from a local primary school is working one day per week to support improvement in mathematics. Two additional governors have been appointed. A senior teacher has returned from a long-term absence.

Main findings

The local authority, senior leaders and the governing body reacted quickly to the outcomes of the previous inspection as shown by the rapid appointment of additional staff and governors. This has strengthened the school's leadership and teaching capacity. Clear plans

for improvement are in place which focus on the areas identified at the previous inspection. These plans build effectively on the school's long-term development plans in prioritising improvement in pupils' achievement in mathematics and in the governance of the school. Whilst the plans provide a clear outline of the expected overall improvement they lack sufficient clarity about the specific timescales for improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement and, in particular, a projected exit point from 'requires improvement' to being re-inspected and judged as a 'good' school. An external review of governance has been arranged to take place in June 2013, with the support of the local authority and an external provider. The procedures adopted by the governing body to evaluate the school's performance are sharper, due to more robust analysis of data and evidence from senior leaders. The minutes of governing body meetings show much better challenge to school leaders.

Senior leaders have ensured a greater emphasis is placed upon pupils' achievement in mathematics. Led well by the advanced skills teacher, teachers are using more skilled questioning to develop pupils' understanding and are increasing the challenge offered to pupils especially in the mental mathematics parts of lessons. Teachers' lesson plans show much improvement in these areas. Leaders' observations provide evidence of the impact in classrooms. The advanced skills teacher is providing modelled lessons for teachers to observe and is leading staff training to increase their skills.

The school has sharpened the use of pupil progress meetings which track the progress made by pupils especially in mathematics. The additional support from the ex-headteacher is helping to drive greater accuracy in the use of data and raise expectations about how much progress pupils should make. The latest data shows more pupils are on track to make expected and above expected rates of progress.

The headteacher and senior leaders have improved staff morale whilst raising their expectations about teaching performance. Well-matched training has been provided to improve teachers' general skills, especially in mathematics. This has been achieved through whole staff meetings and coaching sessions. Individual support and training to address specific teaching performance needs, and thereby improve the consistency of good and better teaching, have yet to be implemented.

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:

- Strengthen the improvement plan by clearly defining the exit timescales for being judged as a good school
- Provide individually targeted training to address any underperformance, improve the proportion of teaching which requires improvement so that more is good, and similarly, improve the proportion of good teaching so that more is outstanding.

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

External support

The local authority works well in support of the school. The school was able to make additional appointments quickly due to the help of the local authority in identifying suitable

professionals. The school has an established partnership with Tickhill Estfeld Primary School, a local outstanding school. This provides opportunities for joint training, moderation of pupils' work and for pupils from both schools to take part in a range of activities.

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

Yours sincerely

John Coleman
Her Majesty's Inspector