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Mrs Mary Dolan
Executive headteacher
Hindringham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Wells Road
Hindringham
Fakenham
Norfolk
NR21 0PL

Dear Mrs Dolan

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Hindringham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Norfolk local authority.

Following my visit to your school on 17 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, I met with you, the head of teaching and learning, the lead teacher, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body together with another governor, and the school's adviser from the local authority. The school action plan was evaluated.

Context

Significant changes in senior leadership, governance and teaching have taken place. At the time of the inspection in February, an acting headteacher was leading the school and temporary arrangements were in place to cover the long-term absence of two teachers. The two teachers recently returned from absence and a long-serving teacher left the school. In April, as planned, Hindringham and three other small, local primary schools came together in a hard federation known as The Pilgrim

Federation. The other schools are Blakeney, Walsingham and Kelling, and all are now church schools. The federation is led by an executive headteacher and a head of teaching and learning, with a lead teacher in each school. There is a new, single governing body.

Main findings

The executive headteacher and the leader of teaching and learning have focused on two things; first, to investigate further the areas identified for improvement at the inspection and, second, to establish a shared way forward with staff. For these reasons, a short-term plan was put in place to evaluate the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Although not fit for the purpose of long-term development, the plan is having the desired effects of establishing where the strengths and weaknesses lie, removing any reasons that would hamper rapid improvement and informing future plans and actions.

A thorough review of pupils' progress revealed that there is not enough information available and that pupils' achievements are not well tracked over time. As a result, urgent action is taking place to make sure that current assessments of pupils' work are accurate and provide the information needed to carefully target and track their progress from now on.

Part-time teachers and support staff have been given additional, paid time to plan together to ensure continuity in learning for pupils throughout each week. Teachers' planning has been highlighted for development, especially in the class where the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are taught together.

Since their appointments five weeks ago, senior staff have worked with teachers on ways to improve how the curriculum is taught, how pupils are assessed and how well the environment contributes to learning. As a result, there are now more opportunities for pupils to write at length, pupils' speaking and listening skills have been assessed, and mathematics vocabulary is taught more explicitly. Making sure that pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are ready for the next stage in their education is also a current focus.

The governing body is very clear about its roles and responsibilities, and the need to focus improvements on pupils' learning. Suitable arrangements are in place to make sure that the particular needs of this school are given the attention needed within the wider business of the federation. Formal monitoring has not yet taken place.

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

- prepare and implement an action plan with clear aims and measurements that will lead to good teaching and good progress for all pupils.

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

External support

Senior leaders are well placed to make good use of external support from a range of sources. The local authority gives an appropriate level of support. The local authority adviser provides challenge to senior staff about the difference that their actions make to pupils' progress, and to teachers about how their teaching makes a difference to pupils' learning. In addition to seeking out good practice in other schools within the federation, senior leaders have established a collaborative arrangement with West Raynham and Sculthorpe Teaching School. The teaching school is running a training programme especially for teachers in the federation, with a focus on improving teaching. An external consultant, commissioned by the governing body, also provides support.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector