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Mr Ian Price
Winwick Church of England Primary School
Myddleton Lane
Warrington
Cheshire
WA2 8LQ

Dear Mr Price

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Winwick Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 8 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a group of Year 5 pupils, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also held a telephone conversation with the Director of Education for the Diocese of Liverpool. I evaluated the school action plan and examined a range of documentation, including data on pupils' performance, minutes of meetings of the full governing body and of the finance committee and the curriculum, standards and learning committee, records of meetings with a local leader in education and a senior adviser from the local authority, and minutes of joint meetings between the staff and governors.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, the governing body has started the recruitment process for the appointment of an early years teacher and a deputy headteacher who will take up their positions in September 2013 and January 2014 respectively.

The diocesan authorities are also hoping to appoint an interim deputy headteacher for the autumn term. The governing body has been restructured and the number of meetings of the curriculum, standards and learning committee has been increased, to ensure that pupils' progress is monitored regularly.

Main findings

You and your governors accept that the school requires improvement and have a shared ambition to ensure that the school is good by December 2014 and outstanding by 2016.

The governors have taken a very active role in working with you and the staff on revising the action plan, to take full account of the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report. They have a clear idea of what needs to be done to make the school better and have been prepared to take tough decisions to ensure that staff recruitment is stringent and attracts the right people for the leadership roles.

In our discussions, you articulated a clear strategy for achieving your aims. You recognise that there is now a need to refine your action plan by including precise targets and milestones to determine where you want the school to be in the short, medium and long term. The resources for implementing the plan are clearly identified, as are the responsibilities for monitoring progress. You have conducted a detailed examination of results and have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and in attainment and progress. The governors also are in no doubt about where improvement is necessary. However, the school's targets have not yet been translated into individual performance management targets, to ensure that the high staffing costs are justified by good attainment and progress by the pupils.

Examination of data and of the displays of children's work shows that you are making good progress in implementing the recommendations for improving writing and mathematics. The interactive displays, where children are asked to identify parts of speech and aspects of punctuation, are proving popular with the pupils, although further thought needs to be given to ensuring that displays for the youngest children are at the correct height. The Year 5 pupils whom I met knew what their targets were, how much progress they had made during the term and over the year and where they needed to concentrate their efforts to improve further. Marking is now more detailed and informative but there is still a need for more opportunities to produce extended writing in subjects other than English.

On the basis of the evidence, my judgement is that senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- refine the school action plan so that it includes quantifiable targets and timescales for improvement in the short, medium and long term

- translate the overall school targets into clear performance management targets to ensure that the school provides value for money
- work with the local authority and the diocese to ensure that an interim deputy headteacher is appointed for the autumn term and a permanent deputy headteacher is in post in January 2014.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has brokered support, which you have found very useful, from leaders of schools within and outside the area, to advise on the development of your action plan. It has also arranged training for the governors from an independent company. This proved valuable in enabling them to identify their priorities for development. In addition, a senior adviser from the local authority has provided specific advice on the development of early years provision and on the appointment of a new teacher and a deputy headteacher. Further support has been provided by the Diocese of Liverpool whose officers are seeking to identify an interim deputy headteacher for the autumn term and are examining ways of improving the fabric of the school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Warrington local authority, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Liverpool and the lead inspector.

Yours sincerely

Aelwyn Pugh

Her Majesty's Inspector