

12 July 2013

Mrs Claire Green
The Headteacher
Capenhurst Church of England Primary School
Capenhurst Lane
Capenhurst
Chester
Cheshire
CH1 6HE

Dear Mrs Green

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

Following my visit to your school on 12 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, another senior leader, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school action plan. You and I visited each classroom to meet pupils and staff. You showed me evidence of the recent changes to the marking policy when I looked at pupils' work. The marking now shows the children where they have produced good work and what they need to improve, although this is not applied consistently across all classes. I met with seven pupils from Years 1 through to Year 6. I also looked at the governing body's draft action plan and reports from external advisors to the school.

Main findings

You, the governors and staff have responded well to the judgement of the previous inspection and are determined to improve the performance of the school to good.

The school action plan focuses clearly on tackling the areas for improvement identified in the recent inspection. However, the plan could be improved by adding specific dates for some of the actions and detailing how you will judge the success of these actions. You and I discussed ways you could share the leadership of areas of the plan with other staff to ensure aspects are tackled swiftly and other staff gain leadership skills. The impact of specific interventions used in the school needs to be measured and detailed in the Pupil Premium report on the school website.

You are determined to strengthen the quality of teaching and make lessons consistently good or better. The new marking system introduced since the last inspection is clearly understood and liked by the pupils and is helping them improve their work. They understand their targets and said that staff are always ready to help. However they mentioned that low level chatter continues to interrupt lessons and their learning. There is still an over reliance on the use of worksheets although you are addressing this in your action plan. You need to start at the beginning of next term to tackle this area of improvement quickly.

Recent changes have been made to the behaviour policy to ensure pupils are ready and able to learn in lessons and around the school. The pupils I talked to were able to tell me all the 'Golden Rules' and give me examples to show they understood what these meant in practice. Pupils said that a few children tried to impress their friends by misbehaving and altering the traffic lights on the behaviour monitoring boards in class, but, they could also give lots of examples of pupils who always behaved well. Parents, staff and pupils were all consulted about the new behaviour policy and the pupils were keen to tell me they want good deeds to be rewarded and ask for this to be included in the policy. Pupils said that they need to improve their listening skills and not to interrupt or talk over other people as this stopped them learning in lessons. However, the rules for managing pupils' behaviour need to be applied consistently by all staff.

You were swift to act on the comments made by parents and called a meeting immediately following the last inspection to keep parents better informed of changes being made in the school and how the children are making progress. You are keen to keep up and strengthen regular communication with parents and are a visible and available presence to parents every day.

Governors have arranged for a review of governance and have two national leaders of governance to help them. As a result, the governing body has drafted an action plan and started to increase the impact they have. The Chair of the Governing Body is determined that appropriate sub-committees will be in place by November to challenge and support the school.

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:

- Add dates, the person responsible and how the success will be measured to some parts of the plan
- Distribute leadership by empowering your staff through increased training and responsibility
- Continue to provide and increase opportunities for two-way communication with parents
- Encourage parents to work with the school to promote consistently good behaviour and learning
- Check pupils' books regularly to make sure teachers' comments consistently help pupils correct mistakes and make progress

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. I will keep in contact with you and return to visit the school in the autumn term to observe the impact of your action plan.

External support

A school improvement advisor, provided by the local authority, has visited the school since the last inspection and produced a report to support the leadership team. Although the local authority has clear plans for supporting you through mentoring and liaising with other schools these have not started yet. However, you have been proactive in asking for advice from an education consultant and through your involvement with a consortium of other headteachers in Ellesmere Port. You have plans to continue this alongside the support offered by the local authority which should start as a matter of urgency in September.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cheshire West and Chester and as below.

Yours sincerely

Christina McIntosh

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- the academy chain where relevant
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.