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11 September 2013

Mrs Peta Cocker
Headteacher
Headlands Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior, Infant and Nursery School
Headlands Road
Liversedge
West Yorkshire
WF15 6PR

Dear Mrs Cocker

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Headlands Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior, Infant and Nursery School, Kirklees

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

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:

- include quantitative milestones in the action plan so that governors can check and challenge the school's progress
- work with governors to agree how they can best be involved in the monitoring cycle through regular school visits
- ensure there is no overlap in the work of the local authority consultant and independent consultant in order to maximise the impact of their work
- develop more effective links between the nursery provision and Reception classes through the work of the Early Years Leader of Learning
- complete a year's overview of actions related to the areas for improvement which will make clear and mark the school's journey to good

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, middle leaders, the Governing Body, two representatives of the local authority and the independent consultant to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated.

In addition, you undertook a learning walk with the acting deputy headteacher and I to identify, and discuss, the changes made to teaching and learning since the inspection. You also provided an overview of achievement for 2012/13 which I was able to review.

Context

Since the inspection there have been a number of changes in staffing. Two Leaders of Learning have been appointed for Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2. Three newly qualified teachers have been appointed. One permanent member of the teaching staff has gone on maternity leave and another has returned.

Main findings

Seniors leaders lost no time in responding to the inspection outcomes. They wrote an initial thirty day action plan focused on actions that would move forward the key areas for improvement and ensure an effective start to the new academic year. For example, one action was to develop a teaching and learning handbook. The overall aim was to secure consistency in teaching and learning across school and agree what good teaching and learning looks like. The learning walk and discussions with staff demonstrated that all staff, including newly appointed staff, understand this and have acted upon the guidance. A further termly plan has been written, again focusing on the actions from the inspection. This plan clearly states what is to be done, by whom and when. However, it does not provide the quantitative milestones needed in teaching and learning and pupil progress. A monitoring and evaluation schedule details the precise actions leaders will take to check on the implementation of this during the autumn term.

The introduction of a new tracking system will ensure staff can more easily identify key groups and trends in performance. Senior leaders intend to use this information in half termly progress meetings to hold staff to account and to support judgements on teaching and learning over time.

The leadership of the school has been strengthened through a review of staffing and two new appointments to the leadership team. Leaders know what is expected of them and share the headteacher's and acting deputy headteacher's passion and drive to improve outcomes for pupils. During our meeting they were clear about what needs to be done and how they will do it. They value the management time and support being given to increase their effectiveness.

Governors know the school's strengths and areas for development. Rightly, they recognise the need to make links with middle leaders, class teachers and pupils to further inform the established checks on the school's progress and development.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. I intend to revisit the school in the spring term to further check on the impact of actions. The headteacher has agreed, with the support of the local authority, to revise the action plan and forward a copy to me.

External support

The governors and headteacher have been proactive in seeking external support. This is

providing them with an objective view of the school's progress and is supporting leaders to make the necessary improvements. The external consultant has also brokered a link with an outstanding school and this has led to changes in the way the school tracks pupil progress and holds staff to account.

The local authority is undertaking half termly monitoring visits and is funding consultant support to improve standards in maths and English. The summer term note of visit provides a detailed overview of the school's progress and recommendations for further action which the local authority will continue to check and report on.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Bowyer

Her Majesty's Inspector