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19 September 2013

Mr Chris Belton
Headteacher
St John the Baptist CofE Primary School
Vale Road
Colwick
NG4 2ED

Dear Mr Belton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St John the Baptist CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 September 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.

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:

- organise an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved
- ensure that key information about pupils' progress in each year group is reported to the governing body, at least once each term, so that governors are more easily able to challenge senior leaders about any underperformance

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, and representatives of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated and a number of other documents were checked, including the outcomes of leaders'

monitoring activities and the school's single central record of staff suitability checks. You accompanied me on a tour of the school, which included drop-ins to all classes, with the exception of Year 6 who were away from school on a residential trip, to observe pupils while they were learning.

Context

Since the last inspection, two teachers have left the school. Two new teachers have been appointed.

Main findings

You have wasted no time in taking appropriate actions to begin to improve your school. You have devised a detailed school improvement plan, with the support of the local authority, which addresses all of the key issues identified at the time of the last inspection. The plan includes clear milestones to help all leaders, including the governing body, to check that actions are making enough impact on improving the school. During my visit, you agreed to make some very minor amendments to the plan, to raise your expectations of the progress pupils should make in Key Stage 2.

The work you are doing to improve the quality of teachers' marking and feedback to pupils is particularly impressive. Leaders have conducted detailed and regular reviews of the quality of marking in each class and have clearly identified how each teacher can improve this aspect of their work. Teachers have responded well to this and, as a result, the quality of teachers' marking is much better than it was previously. Leaders have also observed teaching in each class, maintaining a sharp focus on how well individual teachers are responding to each of the areas identified for improvement at the time of the last inspection.

The governing body is becoming increasingly involved in checking the work of the school. For example, governors have attended 'assessment meetings' with leaders to check how much progress different groups of pupils are making. This is beginning to help them to ask more searching questions of school leaders. However, governors acknowledge that they still need to develop better skills and systems to enable them to challenge school leaders more robustly. To help them to do this, you have agreed to improve the quality of your termly reports to the governing body, by including data about pupils' progress in each year group. An external review of governance will help the governing body to identify exactly what it can do to become stronger and more effective. You have agreed to help the governing body to organise this as soon as possible.

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

You have worked effectively with your partner school to help improve the quality of teaching. As a result of improving teaching quality, your pupils are beginning to catch up from their previous underachievement.

The local authority has provided useful support for leaders since the last inspection. For example, through helping leaders to improve the quality of school action plans, and through monitoring the impact of work with your partner school.

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

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Spencer
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools