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17 September 2013

Mrs Elaine Morgan
Headteacher
Glazebury CofE (Aided) Primary School
Warrington Road
Glazebury
Warrington
Cheshire
WA3 5LZ

Dear Mrs Morgan

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Glazebury CofE (Aided) Primary School, Warrington

Following my visit to your school on 16 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 June 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- amend the action plan so that it:
 - focuses on the specific areas for improvement identified in the inspection report
 - includes quantifiable targets, with detailed timescales for their achievement
 - identifies clear milestones for assessing the speed of progress made
- ensure that every member of the governing body takes an active role in providing support and challenge to the school and in monitoring its progress towards being a good school.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, members of the Governing Body, a group of Year 6 pupils and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school action plan. I also examined analyses of pupils' progress, lesson observation records, the revised marking grid, notes of visits by the senior adviser from the local authority and a position paper prepared by governors.

Context

There have been no changes of staff since the inspection but three new members have recently been appointed to the governing body.

Main findings

You, your staff and governors accept that the school needs to improve and you have a shared ambition to ensure that it becomes good as soon as possible. Teachers and support staff are positive and determined to succeed. Since the inspection, you have made a number of changes, including revising the marking policy, increasing the number of lesson observations and introducing a new system of target setting. You have also reviewed pupils' performance, in order to establish higher expectations in terms of progress, and have held training sessions on how to improve teaching. Discussions with Year 6 pupils show some of these changes, particularly the new approach to target setting and marking, are being reflected in the classroom. However, you have not produced a sufficiently detailed action plan to give coherence and clarity to the changes you are introducing.

The action plan does not relate closely enough to the recommendations in the inspection report. For example, Priority 1 of the plan focuses on ensuring that all teaching is consistent and at least good. However, it makes no reference to 'taking better account of what pupils already know' or to providing 'work that captures pupils' interest', both of which are referred to specifically in the report. The success criteria and timescales are too vague. For example, one success criterion is that all teaching should be good or better. However, it is not clear when you expect this to happen and there are no milestones for assessing progress towards that target. Another intended outcome is that a 'growing proportion of children' will make good progress. Again, there are no clear figures to indicate how much growth you are expecting over what period of time. Without this detail, it will be difficult for you and your governors to conduct an accurate assessment of progress.

In our discussions, you showed that you have identified which staff need additional support and you have clear plans for providing this. However, it was less evident how you intend to ensure that staff whose teaching is good continue to perform at that level and improve to outstanding.

With the support of a National Leader for Governance, a start has been made on reviewing the governing body. The committee structure and individual governors' roles have been revised and some initial training has taken place to improve governors' knowledge and skills. However, a detailed programme for development has not yet been finalised. The changes to date have been mainly at the instigation of a very small group of governors. Not all governors take a regular and active part in the life of the school and the governing body has been insufficiently involved in drawing up the school action plan.

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 return to the school in December 2013 to check on progress and offer support if necessary.

External support

Since the inspection, the local authority has changed the designation of the school from a school requiring enhanced support to one causing concern and has increased the amount of support it provides. This includes more frequent monitoring by local authority officers and additional funding for advice, support and training brokered through the authority's traded services. Training sessions have been held with staff and governors and an external review of the governing body, also funded by the local authority, has recently begun. It is too early to assess the impact of this support, although it has been well received. The authority has also provided good advice on developing the school action plan but this is not consistently reflected in the current document.

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

Yours sincerely

Aelwyn Pugh

Her Majesty's Inspector