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Jonathan Tye
Headteacher
Churchgate Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Hobbs Cross Road
Harlow
Essex
CM17 0LB

Dear Mr Tye

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Churchgate Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Harlow

Following my visit to your school on 26 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:

- Ensure that the proportion of good teaching continues to rise and is secure across the full range of subjects.
- Include all senior leaders and some governors in the process of analysing, interpreting and interrogating the school's national data.
- Ensure that the external audit of the effectiveness of governance is completed, a report written and that the recommendations are implemented.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, two governors and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken

since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's action plans. The deputy and I spent time visiting all classrooms where I sampled pupils' work in their books randomly.

Context

Since the previous inspection three teachers have left the school. Two new teachers have joined the school on permanent contracts and one on a fixed-term temporary contract. The subject leaders for mathematics and literacy are new to leading these subjects since September 2013.

Main findings

Key leaders, including governors are working hard to move the school forward at a suitable pace. A carefully contrived plan of action underpins their work and helps to ensure that actions are implemented on time. The plan is designed to accelerate pupils' progress and raise their attainment. The 2013 initial results in reading, writing and mathematics for seven- and eleven-year-olds show improvement from the previous year: they are significantly better in mathematics.

Teachers are seen teaching regularly by school leaders and external advisers. They receive feedback so that they know what to do improve. Steps have been taken to provide staff with the right training to support them in improving their performance. An expectation follows that this will make a noticeable difference to how well pupils are learning. You and the deputy are checking on the progress that pupils are making through regular meetings with class teachers. It will be important to ensure that teachers and leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics also know the standards that pupils are reaching and are measuring their progress. I found some errors in your internal records of the school's national data. Not all of the senior team and governors are familiar with this important information. As a result, mistakes are not being picked up immediately.

Governors are undertaking a range of training, provided by the local authority and the diocese, to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding of governance. They are just beginning to monitor the school's work more closely so that they are able to make informed decisions and ask the right questions to challenge school leaders.

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 school has forged links with good schools in the area so that staff are able to visit and see good and better teaching in action. The local authority has found a coaching partner for the headteacher. Guidance, training and coaching from the

mathematics consultant has contributed to the better achievement of pupils in the subject. Information about children's achievement at the end of reception has been checked externally for accuracy. The external review of governors' practice, brokered by the local authority, has been slow to complete and, despite the process beginning in June, the governing body is not in receipt of a full report with a list of recommendations to implement.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman

Her Majesty's Inspector