

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancs Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 1231231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566 857
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
jkinsman@cfbt.com



20 September 2013

Mr Chris McConnell
Headteacher
All Saints Upton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Hough Green Road
Widnes
Cheshire
WA8 4PG

Dear Mr McConnell

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to All Saints Upton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Halton

Following my visit to your school on 19 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 because plans are not yet focused enough on bringing about improvement at a more rapid pace. The school should take immediate action to:

- revise the school improvement plan so that all involved know exactly what actions need to take place and how they will improve pupils' education to good; who will be responsible for driving them forward; indicating when actions will start and finish; and include key review points so that everyone can check if the action has been successful
- ensure the assessment of pupils' achievement is secure so that it provides a baseline from which to plot pupils' progress
- regularly and rigorously check all aspects of teaching and learning to ensure pupils make better progress
- provide support to rapidly improve teaching that is not judged good or better.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy head teacher, senior leaders and four governors. I visited the Reception class to observe pupils' learning and to hold a short discussion with the Early Years Foundation Stage leader. I evaluated the school improvement plans and scrutinised a variety of documentation including the mission statement review, a suite of policies, governing body minutes and a summary of the baseline information on pupils' progress you have collected.

Context

Since the inspection you have taken up your role as the new headteacher.

Main findings

Response to the inspection findings was initially slow but you have made a purposeful start on prioritising what the school needs to do to improve. Since the start of this term you have started to tackle the weaknesses in the quality of teaching and leadership with a greater sense of urgency. Essential processes have been introduced to provide a system of accountability by all members of staff and provide a clear steer forward. Staff comment on increased morale and a determination to improve. This bodes well for more rapid improvement.

Senior leaders have been set distinct parameters within which they can contribute to the improvement of the school. A suite of policies, such as a new teaching and learning policy, to guide the work of staff have been agreed and implemented. Senior leaders have introduced a new marking policy which staff are beginning to use. It is still too early to determine the effect these new ideas are having on raising pupils' achievement. Staff have checked the attainment of all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics so that senior leaders can establish a baseline from which to measure progress. However, the accuracy of this information has still to be secured.

You, with the support of the local authority, have organised visits for the Early Years Foundation Stage leader to observe outstanding provision and she has started to explore how she can adapt the curriculum to enable children to develop their independence. However, it is early days for this development to identify any improvement.

You have started to review the quality of teaching by a scrutiny of lesson plans, asking staff to reflect on their own practice and by informal visits to classrooms. Staff have received overall feedback from these actions. It is too early to identify the impact these changes are having on pupils' learning and progress. More information on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are needed for strengths and weaknesses in practice to be identified and specific training to be tailored to the needs of each member of staff.

An action plan has been written in response to the points for improvement mentioned in the inspection report. This serves as an operational to start the term rather than a strategic plan to ensure the school improves to good before its next inspection. The priorities within the action plan need to be more closely linked to how pupils will make more rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Key review points need to be included in the plan so that

senior leaders, governors and staff can plot the progress to good. Similarly, it needs to highlight how the school is going to increase the achievement of pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those who are more able.

Governance has been strengthened by the appointment of a parent governor with experience in the education sector. The Chair of Governors has only recently made arrangements for an external review on 28 October. The weekly meetings between the headteacher and Chair of Governors have been maintained.

Despite the quicker pace of change and the ensuing momentum since the start of September, overall there has not yet been enough impact on accelerating pupils' progress.

Her Majesty's Inspector will:

- signpost the school to other schools which have outstanding practice in Early Years Foundation Stage provision, and whole school developments in writing
- ensure the school is invited to Ofsted's 'Getting to Good' seminar as soon as possible
- use Ofsted's publications to provide support for subject leaders
- review the revised action plan to confirm that it sets a clear steer for rapid improvement
- visit the school in early 2014 to evaluate the impact of the actions the school is taking to get to good.

External support

Governors have drawn upon the effective support of the local authority and diocese to appoint the new headteacher. As a consequence of this good appointment, improvements are accelerating.

Prior to the inspection the local authority support was minimal; now a new School and Setting Improvement Officer (SSIO) has been appointed to provide support for up ten days per year with the flexibility to offer more if needed. As a new member of the governing body she can provide increased support and challenge to the school. An experienced headteacher provides mentor support for the new headteacher and a Local Leader of Education (LLE) is also supporting the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Eileen Mulgrew

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
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- Diocese - for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk] - for academies