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Headteacher
Ms Elizabeth Dickenson
St Andrew's CofE Primary School
Weald Drive
Furnace Green
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Dear Ms Dickenson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Andrew's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 20 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 June 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 all teaching staff and teaching assistants make the changes required to their classroom practice
- build in more challenge to some achievement targets, particularly the progress expected of the most able pupils, and the achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium.

Evidence

During the visit, I met you and other senior leaders, representatives of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. Aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures were

scrutinised. I visited every classroom with you and your deputy, seeing teaching and learning, and looking at pupils' books. I evaluated the school's improvement plans, formulated since the previous inspection.

Context

A new subject leader for mathematics has been appointed since the previous inspection. One teacher joined the school this term.

Main findings

Your response to the previous inspection has been thoughtful, well-judged and vigorous. You have signalled clearly to staff that, in order for 'things to be better', change is necessary. To this end, you have worked with your staff to redefine the ways that teaching and learning in every classroom takes place, and have communicated your intentions in clear and well-constructed action plans. These plans are of good quality; they describe clearly the changes that you expect to bring about at key points over the next two years. Some targets could be more precise and other could provide more challenge, particularly those around progress measures for groups, including pupils eligible for the pupil premium and the most able.

Governors are ambitious for the school and for the achievement of pupils. They value the opportunities presented to them in the school's action plans to have a firm grasp of what changes will be taking place, and when, and how impact will be gauged. They, and the local authority, believe that you and your senior staff have the capacity to deliver the required improvements.

Your reorganisation of teaching time into three weekly cycles has great potential to support the changes in teaching and learning that you want to see, and to provide you with continual high quality feedback. Ensuring that teachers gauge the progress made by pupils over these short time intervals requires them to reflect on the impact of their teaching and to adjust strategies over the next cycle of three weeks; this promotes pace and accountability. Your monitoring programme is well thought-through: it ensures that there are brief but regular opportunities to highlight the gains in pupils' learning over each three week block. The fact that every senior member of staff has a high quality conversation with every member of staff about their impact on children's achievement over the course of a year, will provide you with high quality information about the success of your strategies.

There is some outstanding practice evident in the school. For example, some marking seen in Year 6 books during the visit has the potential to have considerable impact on pupils' learning, because it establishes a dialogue between teacher and pupils and targets specific improvements in the quality of written work strongly. Several lessons seen involved the good use of assessment information to steer

lesson planning, and the steady judging of pupils' quality of learning during a lesson. These represent improvements beginning to come about already.

Teaching and learning in mathematics have been completely reorganised in response to the urgent need to improve pupils' progress in this subject. Pupils now adopt a problem-solving approach to learning mathematics; opportunities are carefully planned-in to reinforce basic techniques. Learning mathematics within a real context allows them to understand why the subject is important, and to develop good thinking skills and a sense of fun in the process of enquiry. These changes have considerable potential to drive up standards.

These changes also give you ways of supporting children to become more confident independent learners. They require pupils to research information for themselves, and make their own decisions about the kind of apparatus and resources they need to meet challenges. There are still some teachers who are struggling to change their approach to meet your new expectations. They are being supported and you are resolute that all teaching will have the well-defined consistent strengths necessary in order to support St Andrew's to become a good school by the time of its next inspection.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. You have already booked places on a 'Getting to Good' conference and I will send details of further conferences we offer on supporting better progress for pupils eligible for the pupil premium, and in the teaching of English, when I know these dates. We agreed that a further visit from me in the summer term next year, to gauge progress against your action plans, would be useful.

External support

The school benefits from the support of a local authority link adviser who works closely with senior staff and governors to identify improvement needs and discuss the nature of responses. An associate adviser has worked usefully with the staff after the previous inspection in preparation for the changes that were to be introduced, and he will continue to work with middle leaders this year. While the diocese remains supportive of the school's vision it provides little by way of advisory support.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex and the director of education in the diocese of Chichester.

Yours sincerely

Alan Taylor-Bennett
Her Majesty's Inspector