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20 September 2013

Mr J Seaward
Acting Headteacher
Newport Church of England Aided Primary School
Hazel Close
Carisbrooke Meadows
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 5GD

Dear Mr Seaward

Special measures monitoring inspection of Newport Church of England Aided Primary School

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 confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 2013.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, the Principal of Christ the King College, three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body and vice-chair, and the District Manager from Hampshire local authority. During a tour of the school, I made short visits to some classes with you and the deputy headteacher.

The statement of action produced by the Isle of Wight local authority and the school's improvement plan were evaluated. The checks the school undertakes to verify the suitability of new staff to work with children were scrutinised.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection there have been some significant changes to staffing. Eight members of the teaching staff left at the end of the last academic year and seven new teachers have been appointed. One member of staff is on maternity leave and her class is being covered by a supply teacher. The school is currently advertising for a special educational needs coordinator.

The former headteacher left at the end of the summer term 2013. You took up post in September 2013. The Principal of Christ the King College provides support and guidance to the school.

Two additional governors have been appointed to the governing body.

Support for the school has recently transferred from the Isle of Wight local authority to Hampshire local authority.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You and the deputy headteacher have an accurate view of the school's weaknesses including areas that require urgent attention. The increased expectations you both have about the quality of teaching and learning contributed to some of the changes in staffing that have already taken place. You and the deputy headteacher have established clear criteria for making judgements about the quality of teaching; these link well to the national Teaching Standards. You have introduced checks to monitor the progress that all pupils make every half term. Discussions with pupils have been scheduled to take place this term to help them identify for themselves how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

With the support of the governing body, you have invested in a range of exciting reading materials. Consequently, every class now has books that pupils can borrow to read at home. Every class now has planned times for staff to teach pupils how to read. Staff have recently received additional training about how to teach reading, including how to teach phonics (letters and the sounds they represent). Most parents and carers with children who started in Reception this year and with children in Year 1 attended a session informing them about the national changes introduced to the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Together with leaders and managers, you have developed programmes of work for English and mathematics that promote progression of learning and skills from Reception to Year 6. However, the quality and impact of these programmes have yet to be monitored and evaluated.

You inherited the school's improvement plan; together with the deputy headteacher and the Principal of Christ the King College, you have already identified many of its shortcomings. The main weaknesses of the plan are as follows:

- there are not enough quantified targets against which progress can be measured
- it is unclear how frequently progress will be monitored and checked during the course of the year
- there is insufficient detail about how different groups of pupils across the school will benefit from the actions proposed in the plan
- it is unclear how staff will be held to account for the progress made by the pupils they teach.

Together with the deputy, and with the support provided by the Principal of Christ the King College, you have started to make appropriate revisions to the plan. This is so that it can be used as a more effective tool to help the school to improve.

The governing body is not having sufficient impact in bringing about school improvement. An external review of governance has not taken place. Governors agree that this needs to happen urgently. Governors have yet to develop the skills and expertise to enable them to monitor the progress the school is making and to interpret data about the progress of different groups of pupils. However, governors are starting to build on links with Christ the King College to support the school in improving how information about pupils is stored and managed.

You ensure that appropriate checks continue to be made to verify the suitability of staff to work with children.

The statement of action produced by the Isle of Wight local authority does not include sufficient information about how the school will be helped to build the leadership and management capacity to sustain improvement. The statement of action includes many of the same shortcomings found in the school's improvement plan. It does not, for example, include enough measurable targets to enable accurate checks to be made during the year on whether the school is improving quickly enough.

The District Manager for Hampshire local authority recognises the weaknesses within the statement of action and the school's improvement plan. Consequently, Hampshire local authority has devised a clear strategy of support for the school aimed at holding leaders, managers and governors to account for the progress made in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Hampshire local authority has already brokered support for the school to provide guidance about special educational needs, English and mathematics. Governor services from Hampshire are due to start working with governors this term.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The Isle of Wight local authority statement of action is not fit for purpose. It requires improvement in order to remedy the shortcomings identified in this report.

The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose. In addition to the weaknesses identified above, the plan also requires the following improvements:

- ensure the plan clarifies how links with external partners, such as Christ the King College, will contribute to raising the quality of teaching and learning and improving the leadership and management of the school
- ensure the plan clarifies the contribution that leaders, managers and governors will make to improving the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes for pupils
- ensure there is a clear and manageable system to assess pupils' learning
- set challenging targets for all groups of pupils from Reception to Year 6 to increase their rate of learning and progress.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Directors of Children's Services for the Isle of Wight and the Dioceses of Portsmouth and Winchester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier
Her Majesty's Inspector