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27 September 2013

Mrs Alison Simpson
Tewin Cowper Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Cannons Meadow
Tewin
AL6 0JU

Dear Mrs Simpson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Tewin Cowper Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

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 incisive and urgent action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- Ensure that the pupil progress recorded in the school's assessment data base can be easily cross referenced with the work in the pupils' books.
- Ensure that the recent improvements secured in teaching translate into improvements in boys writing.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders and the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. HMI invited senior staff to join the observation of a sample of teaching and the evaluations they offered concurred with the judgements given by HMI. The inspector also reviewed a sample of the children's work from the classes visited. The school has taken robust performance management action which has resulted in staff changes.

Context

An established teacher in Key Stage 1 left at the end of the summer term.

Main findings

Prior to the May 2013 inspection, senior staff had discovered inaccuracies in the 2011 and 2012 Key Stage 1 assessments for those who had been awarded the higher level 2a or level 3 scores. Combined with the effect of the small year groups in the school this had a detrimental impact on Key Stage 1 – 2 value added outcomes which, as a result were not consistently good for all groups. Having identified this issue the senior staff had taken the appropriate action by the time of the last inspection which took place during the week of the Key Stage 2 national tests.

The outcomes of the 2013 Key Stage 2 national tests were notably stronger than those of the previous year, although it should be noted that the Key Stage 1 assessment issues reviewed above will leave a misleading trail in the school's data set for at least two more years.

The leadership's team careful analysis of the schools performance was followed up by an incisive performance management process that secured staff change. HMI saw evidence of good teaching during this visit and noted the accuracy of the schools evaluation of teaching.

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 drawn on effective support from the local authority school improvement team in the analysis and moderation of pupils work and from the Human Resources team to pursue performance management action

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

Yours sincerely

David Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector