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Mr Jim Kreiselmeier
Headteacher
Christ Church C of E Primary Academy
Brockman Road
Folkestone
Kent
CT20 1DJ

Dear Mr Kreiselmeier

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Christ Church C of E Primary Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 2 October 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy 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 academy should take further action to:

- establish sharper, measurable milestones in order to evaluate the impact of changes, particularly in leadership
- make sure that the evaluation of teaching incorporates information about how well pupils are achieving over time as well as lesson observations.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you, other leaders, two governors, a representative of the diocese and the headteacher leader of the Folkestone Ethos School Improvement Group. We discussed the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plan and looked at the outcomes of monitoring activities and information about pupils' achievements. I also had a tour of the school.

Context

Two teachers have joined the school this term. The leadership team has been restructured and two out of the three team leaders are new to these roles.

Main findings

Immediately following the inspection, you raised expectations about how well pupils should be achieving and made explicit the improvements in the quality of teaching that are needed to achieve these aims. A marking and presentation policy has been agreed and pupils' books from all classes checked regularly to make sure that all teachers are following the policy correctly. All teachers have been observed, their planning is checked every week and where weaknesses are found, these are being followed up with coaching and support. Although all of these monitoring activities are being carried out, the evaluation of the quality of teaching in the improvement plan relies too much on lessons observations.

There is increased clarity about leadership roles and responsibilities and also sharper decision making at senior leadership level. The school is now divided into teams, each with a leader who is also a class teacher. These new leaders say that the increased clarity and decisiveness at senior level are building their confidence so that they are better able to support and influence their colleagues at classroom level. They are already reducing the variability in approaches between staff. It is not clear, however, in the longer term, how the impact of these changes on the quality of teaching and learning will be evaluated.

Governors are knowledgeable about the quality of education being provided. They have been involved in devising the improvement plan and undertake valuable monitoring and evaluation activities. They know that pupils' attainment is rising, albeit from a previously low level. They have detailed knowledge of what strategies have been used and which have had the most positive impact. Their ability to evaluate whether the academy is on track to achieve a good quality of education would benefit from working out, with senior leaders, what the success criteria in the improvement plan mean in practice and what evidence they will require in order to evaluate whether actions are making enough difference to pupils.

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 academy is an active member of the Folkestone Ethos School Improvement group of four local Church of England schools. As part of the group, the academy benefits from regular cooperation and shared good practice at all levels, including inter-school moderation to ensure assessments are accurate. The academy draws on expert support from the group and a good example of this is the successful implementation of a systematic approach to teaching early reading and writing.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Kent, the Diocese of Canterbury and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald

Her Majesty's Inspector