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3 October 2013

Mrs Jane Hopkins
Headteacher
Shocklach Oviatt CofE Primary School
Shocklach
Malpas
Cheshire
SY14 7BN

Dear Mrs Hopkins

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Shocklach Oviatt CofE Primary School, Cheshire West and Chester

Following my visit to your school 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 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:

- Increase the opportunities for literacy and numeracy to be developed across the curriculum.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you, the senior teacher, six pupils from Years 3 and 5, the Chair and Vice-Chair and three members of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement plans; the school's tracking of pupil progress; your monitoring and evaluation schedule; progress reports to the governing body and conducted a work scrutiny with you.

Main findings

You, the governors and staff are determined to ensure the school is good. The development plan focuses clearly on the areas for improvement identified in the recent inspection. You have kept the whole school community well informed about the progress being made at the school and the community is very supportive of the team work going on in the school. For example: after the last inspection you wrote to all parents outlining ways they could support the school and their children: as a result, attendance has improved, however, there are still some children arriving late to school. The recent Grandparents' Day and information evening for parents were successful and positive feedback was received about the increased opportunities to discuss and improve pupils' progress and the strengthened Christian ethos of the school.

The quality of teaching has improved in the lessons you have observed this term. Staff are improving the consistency of their assessment of pupils' work through moderation and work scrutiny. A new marking system clearly indicates to the pupils which areas of their work needs to improve, however, the pupils need to respond to the marking on a daily basis so that work can be adapted to ensure learning is secure. Pupils told me the pen licence and the good work board is encouraging them to take pride in the presentation of their work.

Teachers' planning is scrutinised closely and pupils' progress is discussed weekly to ensure pupils are meeting the learning objectives in lessons. Information technology resources have been improved but the impact has yet to be evaluated. Teaching assistants now have targeted timetables to focus on pupils who need extra support. They are starting to help teachers plan the next steps of learning for individual pupils to ensure they are challenged to reach their potential; however, this is still at an early stage. Pupils are beginning to use peer assessment to help improve their understanding, however, good questioning techniques by teachers need to be used consistently well across the school.

Pupils told me they could be more challenged in class and they need to correct their work more regularly and independently. They also implied that the drive to improve writing, reading and mathematics was reducing the opportunities for these to be taught through other subjects more creatively. Pupils said behaviour had improved as teachers are stricter about expectations and sanctions are now in place and used more consistently.

Staff lead subject teams and are accountable for reporting to the governing body. This increased responsibility has improved communication between staff and, combined with their recent training, is driving improvements in mathematics and writing; as well as developing the leadership and management skills of the teachers. The governing body restructured to strengthen their links with subjects and have supported developments with staffing and the school website. They provide a balance of support and challenge and have confidence in you leading the school

forward. The parent teacher association and the diocese are also very proactive in supporting the links between the school and the local and wider community links.

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

You and your staff have been well supported by the local authority. The mathematics consultant has worked with the school to improve the consistency of marking and further work is planned for this term. Support for Early Years and literacy are also scheduled for this term and the local authority will also extend your opportunities for teachers to observe other schools. The school has a school improvement partner who is working closely with you and you have developed good links with another local primary school so you can share good practice. The local authority has confidence in the direction and sense of purpose with which you are driving change within the school. The impact of the support is beginning to be seen through the pupils' awareness of the push to raise standards in their writing and mathematics.

You and the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body attended the Getting to good seminar run by Ofsted which you said was helpful and gave you confidence regarding your action plan and the speed with which you needed to act.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cheshire West and Chester and the Diocese.

Yours sincerely

Christina McIntosh

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
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools