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Mark Thrower
Headteacher
Arnold Seely Church of England (Aided) Primary School
Burnstump Hill
Nottingham, NG5 8PQ

Dear Mr Thrower

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Arnold Seely Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 6 November 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.

The headteacher 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:

- make sure that all teachers check, assess and monitor the progress and performance of the pupils they teach more often and robustly, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics
- make sure that teachers have opportunities to share best practice more often so that all lessons are of good quality or better by the end of this academic year.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and one of the local authority's Education Improvement Advisers. Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) held a telephone conversation with the headteacher of an outstanding infant school, who is also a local leader in education and is supporting the school. Improvement plans were evaluated along with reviews of the quality of teaching and assessments of pupils' progress and performance. HMI

visited all three classes with the headteacher, spoke to some pupils during lessons and at lunchtime, and checked the quality of teachers' marking in some workbooks.

Main findings

Since the headteacher joined in September 2012 leadership and staffing have been more stable. This is welcome because there have been too many temporary headteachers and staff changes in recent years. The actions of this more settled staff team have brought about improvements to pupils' behaviour and attendance, and there is a positive climate for learning in all three classes. Teachers have improved the way they mark pupils' work. Nevertheless, pupils have still got some catching up to do in reading, writing and mathematics because some teaching still requires improvement, and teachers are not always checking pupils' progress robustly enough to ensure that all pupils reach their expected targets.

The school's development plans set out the right priorities to help leaders and governors measure the impact of the school's actions. There is some consistently good teaching for older pupils in one of the Key Stage 2 classes and the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) for younger children is effective. The headteacher is working with the local leader in education to improve the consistency of the teaching, but must now build on this by sharing good practice more often across the school so that all teaching is at least good. Governors have stepped up their monitoring activities and have carried out an audit of governors' skills. This is a positive move and ensures that each governor who is linked to a curriculum subject has the necessary skills to monitor the schools actions.

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 local authority's support for the school has been effective. The school is making good use of the local leader in education to help teachers develop key skills aimed at improving their teaching. A partnership arrangement with another school also has the potential to provide greater clarity for teachers about what constitutes good and outstanding achievement and teaching.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Nottinghamshire local authority and the Director of Education for Southwell and Nottingham Diocese.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Her Majesty's Inspector