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Mrs J Donaldson
Christ Church C of E Primary School
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NW6 7TE

Dear Mrs Donaldson

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

Following my visit to your school on 24 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. Immediate action should be taken to:

- ensure that all teachers in Key Stage 2 set higher expectations of the standards that pupils should achieve, and that challenging work is provided for all including the most able
- take every opportunity to promote and develop pupils' reading skills, again making sure that expectations are high and that work is always challenging
- provide additional, high quality day-to-day leadership for teaching and learning in Key Stage 2.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese. In these meetings, we discussed the action taken since the last inspection and the last monitoring visit. We jointly observed four literacy lessons in Key Stage 2 and I looked at samples of pupils' work in English.

Context

Two experienced teachers and one newly-qualified teacher were appointed in September to teach in Years 3, 4 and 5.

Main findings

The summer 2013 Year 2 test results showed improvements in reading and writing. These built on the good results that pupils achieved in the Year 1 reading checks. While mathematics results dipped a little, Year 2 pupils did well to attain national average standards across all subjects. However, results in Key Stage 2 were very disappointing. In mathematics, despite an increase in the numbers reaching Level 4, Year 6 pupils were still around sixth months behind pupils across the rest of the country. In English, they were a whole year behind; this is worse than in 2012.

For this reason, we visited literacy lessons in Key Stage 2 to observe the quality of teaching and current pupils' work. The teaching that we saw required improvement. This was largely because teachers were not setting high enough expectations of the standards that pupils should achieve. Standards of pupils' work are still behind where they should be. In some cases, the pace of learning is too slow, particularly for the most able pupils for whom the work is not challenging enough. We also saw missed opportunities to develop pupils' reading skills. Reading books given to some pupils are too easy for them. Standards of presentation have improved and pupils are showing greater pride in their work. However, too much work contained basic errors, particularly with spelling and punctuation. While marking is regular, teachers' comments do not always challenge mistakes or show pupils how to improve.

Governors remain dedicated, as shown by their attendance at my feedback. Your own commitment to the school remains firm. You have brought about significant improvements to the school environment; the classrooms and corridors have a much brighter, airier feel to them than was the case in January 2013. You accepted the findings of the first monitoring visit and ensured that a revised, improved action plan was submitted on time. Your judgements in our joint observations were broadly correct. However, we agreed that the school needs more effective day-to-day leadership of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2. At present, teachers do not have an outstanding model from whom they can learn and develop their own practice.

External support

External support from the local authority and the diocese has been ineffective because neither have brought about significant improvements since the section 5 inspection. The partnership with an outstanding diocesan school did not develop as hoped. Recent changes in local authority support have been universally welcomed by the school's leaders. The School Support Group has been replaced by the Rapid Improvement Group which is chaired by the local authority's new Head of School Improvement. A new proposal has been made to partner the school with a local school that recently made significant improvements to become judged 'good' by Ofsted. However, it is too soon to see any significant impact of these initiatives.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Education for the London Diocesan Board for Schools and the Director of Children's Services for Brent.

Yours sincerely

Mark Phillips
Her Majesty's Inspector