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Vanessa Lucas
Headteacher
St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided School, Preston, Weymouth
Littlemoor Road
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Dear Mrs Lucas

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided School, Preston, Weymouth

Following my visit to your school on 13 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 September 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:

- strengthen the school development plan by inserting clear pupil progress targets with termly attainment milestones so that governors and the local authority can precisely evaluate how successful actions have been in raising pupils' achievement
- display a clear timeline of steps to becoming a good school so all staff know what is expected of them
- make better use of the Ofsted survey material for English, mathematics and governance

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The school development plan was evaluated along with minutes of governing body meetings and notes of visits from local authority officers. Outcomes of the school's monitoring activities were also taken into account. I visited some English and mathematics lessons with senior leaders.

Context

A new chair and vice chair of governors have been appointed. One member of the teaching staff is currently absent from work.

Main findings

The consistent message reported during my visit was a sense of frustration that historically, not all staff were fully behind the need for change. This had held back developments. The school has used the inspection findings well to overcome these barriers. Now, improvements in senior leadership have gathered momentum and are being led strongly by the headteacher with renewed vigour. A new set of 'non-negotiables' are raising expectations for all staff. The requirement for teachers to provide evidence of pupils' progress in books at the six weekly review meetings is making them more accountable for their own performance. A clear structure of support and challenge has been established for any teachers not yet performing consistently well.

The school development plan covers what needs to be improved. However, the plan needs to be clearer to better reflect the actual improvement work being undertaken at the school. At present, it is only by talking to staff, visiting lessons and looking at pupils' work that a true picture can be gained. External evaluations are also needed so governors can carefully check if the plan is working. Precise pupil achievement targets are required to articulate the key steps on your journey to becoming a good school.

The revision of the mathematics curriculum has rightly focussed on conceptual development and pupils' problem solving skills. A new approach to lessons is enabling teachers to react more precisely to pupils' individual learning needs. The subject leader for mathematics is aware that the school's preferred approach requires a high level of expertise and some teachers will need additional support. Pupils are now more aware of their next steps in learning because the successful approach to marking used in English has been refined and developed in mathematics.

The new approach to the teaching of phonics is proving successful. Ability grouping during whole class teaching sessions is allowing teachers to target questions to

individual pupils more carefully. Better use of multi-sensory resources is allowing pupils apply their learning more regularly. Visits to outstanding schools have provided leaders with a clear picture of high quality teaching on which to base their training. Short observations of lessons during my time at the school confirmed these developments are progressing well.

The governing body quickly responded to the inspection and devised an action plan to support its own development. Weekly meetings between the chair and the headteacher are providing more opportunities to challenge the work of the school. Learning walks with local authority officers and half-termly work scrutiny activities with subject leaders by link governors are now well established. Governors have a good grasp of the success of initiatives to improve teaching. Attendance at a recent Ofsted seminar, *Getting to Good*, has reinforced to governors the expectation and urgency required by all staff in order to become good. Governors recognise that training on how to interrogate data more precisely and the use of external evaluations would enable them to contribute even more strongly to school developments.

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 received some support from the local authority prior to the section 5 inspection. However, this support had failed to bring about rapid enough improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement. Involvement in the school has now increased. Advisers and consultants now offer well-targeted support and challenge for the school's leaders. The headteacher has received helpful advice on revising the school improvement plan, in light of the inspection findings. Support for mathematics identified a lack of challenge in some classes. This was quickly followed up by additional training for the school. On-going guidance to refine the school's development plan, improve subject leader's lesson observation skills and train governors to interpret data is already planned.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Dorset and the Diocese of Salisbury.

Yours sincerely

Richard Light
Her Majesty's Inspector