

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 0121 6799163
Direct email: lewis.mackie1@serco.com



4 December 2013

Paula Hagan
St Nicholas Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
The Street
Tillingham
CM0 7TJ

Dear Ms Hagan

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Nicholas Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 3 December 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 July 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:

- ensure that work matches pupils' ability in all lessons
- tackle inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' marking and the presentation of pupils' work.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, three members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also evaluated the school action plan, minutes of governing body meetings, and the school's monitoring and assessment documentation. You accompanied me during visits to all classes in the school, where we observed teaching and looked at pupils' work.

Context

You have resigned since the inspection, following your appointment as head teacher at another school. The school have recruited another head teacher who will take up his post in January 2014. A class teacher left the school at the end of the summer and has been replaced.

Main findings

You are making improvements to the quality of teaching. Teachers are consistently providing work in mathematics that offers the right challenge to pupils. This is not the case in literacy, where pupils still do the same work in some classes. In lessons where work matches pupils' needs, teaching assistants are working effectively with groups and supporting them through direct teaching. This is an improvement but more needs to be done so that teachers plan work that meets the needs of all abilities throughout lessons, including those times when a teaching assistant is not available. The quality of marking is improving. The feedback that pupils receive is good in most classes, and there is evidence that they are responding to it well. Your monitoring work tells you that marking is not yet good in all classrooms. In a similar way, you are disappointed by the poor standard of presentation in some books, where the teacher's expectations of handwriting are too low. This is in need of your attention.

Leadership is in a state of change as the new head teacher will be starting work at the school in January. Your post Ofsted action plan identifies clearly what you and the staff have already done and what still needs to be done. The plan is deliberately very detailed, and contains information that will usefully support the transition to new leadership. You know where teaching is strong and where it needs to be improved. During my visit we discussed how you can ensure your observations have more impact on improving the rate of pupils' learning.

Governors responded quickly to the inspection, commissioning an external review that took place in October. This review identified similar weakness to the recent inspection. Several governors have attended training and are putting into practice the recommended actions. The minutes of governors' meetings have improved significantly this term, and there is clear evidence that governors are asking the right kind of questions of school leaders. Governors are visiting the school with more purpose, and they are gathering useful information. For example, one governor spent time in lessons looking first-hand at how teachers were providing work for pupils of different abilities.

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 has provided a good level of support for you and the school since the inspection. An adviser has visited to undertake lesson observations and to review your assessment data. In addition, the local authority is providing training for four teachers: Two are now on the 'improving teaching programme'. A further two teachers have places on the 'outstanding teachers programme'. The local authority has also facilitated partnership with an outstanding school. This has led to support for leadership and a direct link between two teachers.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Essex.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Moodie
Her Majesty's Inspector