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28 November 2013

Mrs J Carrington
Executive Headteacher
Ampfield Church of England Primary School
Knapp Lane
Romsey
SO51 9BT

Dear Mrs Carrington

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ampfield Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2012. 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 all pupils in Key Stage 2 are helped to develop and use the technical language of subjects including through marking and feedback that consistently models what better responses look like
- ensure the drive to improve the attendance of a small group of pupils with persistent absence is having a positive impact
- ensure that all governors are familiar with the expectations of the September 2013 inspection framework.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, Heads of school, representatives of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. Both classes were observed jointly with the inspector and leaders from the school. External data, the schools own assessment information and other self-evaluation documents were evaluated.

Context

The hard federation with John Keble School came into effect from September 2013, including one Governing Body for the two federated schools. This has formalised the arrangement started just prior to the last inspection. The schools have taken the opportunity to restructure senior leadership roles and responsibilities. A new head of school has been appointed for Ampfield, from the partner school, and will take up post from January 2014. The new head of school will also teach the Key Stage 2 class. The current Key Stage 2 teacher has been appointed to the role of special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) for the federated schools and will take up this role in January 2014. Attendance has improved and is just above the national average.

Main findings

The school is able to demonstrate further improvements particularly in the rates of progress made by pupils in all age groups across the school and in the quality of teaching. Teachers have responded positively to training activities and the opportunities to share effective practice and moderate pupils work with the federated school. Consistently better teaching was observed in both classes and pupils are making above expected progress in lessons and over time. Standards are improving rapidly, including phonics, as a result of higher expectations and greater levels of challenge in lessons. Pupils identified with a special educational need and those eligible for the additional pupil premium funding are consistently making above expected progress.

The quality of teaching has continued to improve. Teachers now consistently plan work that challenges the full range of abilities and ages in each class. Marking and verbal feedback has improved significantly. Comments are diagnostic and give pupils very specific next steps of improvement. Pupils are given time to respond and improve their work which is increasing their motivation as well as improving their learning. The use of targets is a strength of the schools work. Pupils know their targets and the relevance to their learning. They have good opportunities for self and peer assessment, using clear success criteria, and accurately identify where targets have been met consistently. Learning support assistants are deployed well and support learning very effectively, especially in Key Stage 1.

Pupils of all ages showed excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning in classes and when talking with the inspector. They are articulate and keen to share what they have learned and persevere to improve their work. For example, one child in the Early Years Foundation Stage class talked confidently, and was able to give a clear explanation, about the nocturnal animals she had found in the outside discovery area and pupils in the Key Stage 2 class were persevering in applying their mathematics knowledge to solve problems. Pupils have good opportunities for extended writing across the full range of subjects and the newly introduced reading journals are motivating pupils of all ages to read more widely.

The headteacher is relentless in her drive for improvement which has resulted in the rapid improvements across the school. Leaders, including governors, monitor the schools work robustly, are accurate in their evaluations of the quality of the schools work and hold staff rigorously to account for pupils' performance in their classes. Leaders have provided effective coaching for individual staff that has impacted positively on the quality of teaching and learning. Governance has been strengthened further through the federation. They robustly challenge and support the school.

External support

The local authority continues to provide effective, and selective, support to senior leaders and teachers. Consultants for English and mathematics have worked with the school since the last inspection resulting in higher expectations of pupils' capabilities and further improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

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

Yours sincerely

Judith Rundle

Additional Inspector