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Stuart McClelland
Acting Headteacher
St Michael's on the Mount Church of England Primary School
Park Lane
Bristol
BS2 8BE

Dear Mr McClelland

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Michael's on the Mount Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 28 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:

- ensure the thorough implementation of the school's marking policy so that it will support individual pupil's learning and rigorously monitor its effectiveness
- further develop governors' monitoring procedures to ensure that senior leaders are held to account for the milestones in the school development plan
- ensure staff and governors are familiar with the findings of the Ofsted survey reports *Getting to good – How headteachers achieve success* and *School governance – Learning from the best* and how they can be

used to support the school's work in improving teaching and raising standards.

- Additionally, the governing body, diocese and local authority need to ensure that any future changes in leadership do not hold back the pace of improvement at the school.

Evidence

During the visit meetings were held with you and the assistant headteachers, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and the local leader in education supporting the school, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school development plan and cycle of monitoring procedures were reviewed in our discussions which included the analysis of the progress made by year cohorts and groups of pupils at the school in reading, writing and mathematics. We also discussed the systems for the monitoring of teaching and the cycle of pupil progress meetings.

Context

You had been appointed to the post as deputy headteacher to begin in September 2013, shortly before the inspection. However, due to the absence through illness of the substantive headteacher, you joined the school as acting headteacher. Since this time you have been working with the two assistant headteachers and together, you form the leadership team. There have been no further changes in staffing since the section 5 inspection. The headteacher remains on sick leave.

Main findings

The school's development plan is effectively linked to the recommendations in the inspection report. There are clear milestones which are measureable success criteria which can be used to judge the impact of improvements. Additionally, there is detailed information on funding and named staff who are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the progress made against the objectives set.

There is a clear system for the monitoring of teaching and this is linked to the cycle of pupil progress meetings, together with the formal performance management procedures. The progress meetings are planned for six times each year with senior leaders tracking the progress made by individuals and groups against the targets set for pupils. Pupils are clear about their targets, for example on punctuation. The monitoring of lessons and planning is focused on ensuring the work provided for pupils matches their abilities and challenges their learning appropriately. This is reviewed through the regular scrutiny of pupils' exercise books the results of which are shared with all teachers and discussed at staff meetings.

Some key lessons are planned jointly by teachers. The observations of these lessons identify important areas for development such as making sure that the level of work is appropriate to pupils' ability levels. This whole school approach has increased teachers' confidence in planning their lessons to meet more effectively pupils' needs. As a result there is evidence of improvement in the quality of teaching noted in the records of monitoring by senior leaders.

The marking policy has recently been reviewed and reinforced by senior leaders. There remains some inconsistency in its use across the school and more rigorous monitoring by senior leaders is required to ensure impact on the continuity of teaching and learning across the school.

The governing body has been supported by the local authority, acting headteacher and local leader in education to develop their knowledge and skills in monitoring performance data in order to hold senior leaders to account. The responsibilities of the governors have been reviewed to include the aspects of the Ofsted inspection framework and the evaluation of pupils' achievement. Plans are in place to develop systems which will enable the visits made by governors to classes to build a better understanding of the work of the school. However, these are not yet a matter of routine practice.

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 draws effectively on support and challenge from the local authority. The school improvement officer has provided good support for the acting headteacher as he has settled into his role. It has also benefitted the governors in developing their understanding of their role in monitoring the effectiveness of the school. The school improvement officer has brokered the successful partnership between the acting headteacher and the local leader in education which has fostered profitable links with senior leaders, teaching staff and governors.

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

Yours sincerely

Robert Pyner
Her Majesty's Inspector