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5 December 2013

Mrs Elaine Burdiss
Headteacher
Elmsett Church of England VC Primary School
The Street
Elmsett
IP7 6PA

Dear Mrs Burdiss

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

Following my visit to your school on 4 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in 8 November 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. The school should take immediate action to:

- Use the criteria provided by Ofsted and the Teachers' Standards to gain greater consistency in judging accurately the overall quality of teaching and the impact this is having on pupils' learning and progress.
- Work with the local authority to validate your views about the quality of teaching and the progress made by all pupils in anticipation of the re-inspection of the school in 2014.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, and four members of the Governing Body. A representative of the local authority joined me on this visit. The school's most recent data about pupils' progress and its development and improvement plan

were evaluated. The local authority adviser observed the quality of teaching and scrutinised pupils' work in two classes and you and I observed the two other classes.

Context

Since the last monitoring inspection visit, a new teacher has joined the school to teach the Year 5 and 6 class. Two teachers share responsibility for the Year 3 and 4 class. The teacher of the Year 1 and 2 class now teaches five days each week. One new member has joined the Governing Body. Attendance remained above average in 2013 and no pupils have been excluded from school.

Main findings

Results in national tests in 2013 show that the standards achieved by Year 6 pupils declined to below the government's current floor standards which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in reading, writing and in mathematics. A brief review of your latest performance data suggests that this year, most pupils in Year 6 are making improved progress, but a few are not achieving what they are capable of, particularly in mathematics.

Based on your own monitoring of lessons, you judge that the overall quality of teaching is good. Observations carried out by you and I, and by the local authority adviser did not confirm this view. We found some good teaching, but most of it required improvement. Presently, I do not consider that the quality of teaching is robust enough to be judged good in the school's re-inspection next year.

Teachers stimulate pupils' interest and manage their behaviour effectively. They facilitate group-work well and mark pupils' work regularly. However, they are not doing enough to accelerate the progress made by all pupils. Not all work is planned to suit pupils of different abilities, so some are not fully challenged and some find tasks too difficult. Not all teachers set pupils clear timescales to complete tasks, or make regular checks of their work in lessons to see if they fully understand what they are doing. Not all pupils' work is completed and, for some, the volume of work done since the start of the year is minimal.

You are monitoring the quality of teaching but are not checking to see whether this is enabling all pupils to achieve their very best. You are not using criteria provided by Ofsted or the Teachers' Standards to help you gain greater consistency in judging the overall quality of teaching.

Governors feel that they are kept informed about the school's performance and feel that they have a better understanding of using performance data to provide support and challenge. They are less clear about the overall quality of teaching and where the strengths and weaknesses lie.

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 continues to provide regular support for the school and remains responsive to the headteacher in her work to prepare the school for its next inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector