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4 December 2013

Ms L Wilson
Headteacher
St Stephen's Church of England Junior School
Lansdown Road
Kingswood
Bristol
BS15 1XD

Dear Ms Wilson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Stephen's Church of England Junior 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 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.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the Chair of the Governing Body who was accompanied by two other governors, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school's improvement plan and the governing body's action plan were evaluated. During my visit, I had further meetings with you and we undertook a learning walk together.

Main findings

When the school was inspected in September 2013, you had been in post for less than a month. The report noted that you had quickly gained a clear understanding of what the school does well and what needed to improve. You have shared with staff and the governing body up-dated information about pupils' achievement based on published data, your own astute observations from lessons, and the work in pupils' books. From your evidence you have swiftly devised and implemented high quality action plans to drive school improvement.

The speed in which you have implemented change is impressive. So is the way that you have got staff 'on-board' with the need to apply the new policies and processes on a daily basis. Good quality training programmes for staff and the governing body have increased their understanding of what needs to be done and how change can be achieved successfully. The closely integrated plans and monitoring systems ensure that all can be held to account for their area(s) of responsibility.

During our learning walk, we noted that pupils were attentive and lessons were taking place in an orderly manner. Your previous experience of leading an outstanding school is clearly already paying dividends. This is evidenced through the improved behaviour of pupils along with everyone understanding their responsibilities; including how they will be held accountable.

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

You have been pro-active in seeking new external support from the local authority, neighbouring schools, as well as utilising the expertise and contacts that you have made in the past. Good quality external training has been highly focussed on the key aspects that will quickly improve the outcomes for pupils; more is planned. Training is cascaded, which along with the increased support and coaching is steadily increasing the expertise within the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Steffi Penny
Her Majesty's Inspector