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Claire Collett
Interim and Executive Headteacher
The St Faith and St Martin Church of England Junior School
Hampton Street
Lincoln, LN1 1LW

Dear Ms Collett

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The St Faith and St Martin Church of England Junior School, Lincoln

Following my visit to your school on 6 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. The school should take further action to:

- secure more permanent, sustained and consistent leadership
- undertake sharper evaluations of teaching so that staff receive more precise feedback about the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning
- train teachers and middle leaders to measure how much progress pupils should be making in lessons and over time in reading, writing and mathematics.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the interim headteacher and three teachers who have management responsibilities. The inspector held a telephone conversation with the deputy headteacher as she was off site with pupils undertaking an outdoor educational visit. Meetings were held with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and an education improvement adviser. The inspector spoke to a group of parents to seek their views about the school's performance.

Action plans and the most recent national assessments of pupils' attainment and progress were evaluated. The inspector visited classes with the interim headteacher.

Context

Two new staff joined the school in September 2013 and the interim headteacher joined in November to manage the school until the substantive headteacher returns from sick leave.

Main findings

Staff turnover and unstable leadership partly explain the decline in standards as reported in September 2013. Nevertheless, the interim headteacher and newly appointed middle leaders are having a positive impact. Standards are recovering and are above the national average in English and mathematics. Newly appointed teachers have settled into their roles and their teaching is of good quality. In a short time, the interim headteacher has established her leadership and earned the respect of pupils, parents and staff. The school is now ready to push on to achieve even higher standards. The governing body is managing well with the difficulties of providing stability by appointing effective interim leadership. Securing permanent and more consistent leadership now needs to be the most urgent priority to sustain improvements and reassure parents. The school's development plan sets out the right priorities to help leaders evaluate the impact of their actions. Governors and leaders monitor standards, although teachers do not always receive enough feedback about the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning, or enough guidance on how best to help pupils achieve higher standards more rapidly.

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 is making good use of a local collaboration of schools to develop school-to-school support that focuses on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are increasingly seeing and sharing good practice with the potential for these links with other schools to provide greater clarity for teachers about what constitutes good and outstanding achievement and teaching.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire local authority and the Director of Education of the Diocese of Lincoln.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Her Majesty's Inspector