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17 January 2013

Mr Andrew Wilson
Headteacher
The Trinity Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Devizes
Quakers Road
Devizes
SN10 2FH

Dear Mr Wilson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Trinity Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Devizes

Following my visit to your school on 15 January 2014, 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 November 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:

- provide teachers with further guidance, including Ofsted's subject survey and professional development materials, to support the teaching of mathematics
- ensure that pupils understand clearly what they need to do next in order to raise their attainment in mathematics
- review the performance objectives of senior leaders to make sure they reflect current responsibilities
- revise the timescale, criteria and interim objectives for gauging success in the action plan to set out clearly when achievement is expected to be good.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, a group of pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We visited each classroom briefly to look at aspects of teaching and learning. I evaluated the school's action plan and scrutinised a range of other documents including data on pupils' attainment and the progress they make.

Context

The deputy headteacher left the school at the end of the last term. The membership of the senior leadership team has been extended to include the Early Years Foundation Stage leader and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator. A newly qualified teacher has joined the school on a fixed term contact.

Main findings

The school's leaders have taken determined action to build on the improvements that were recognised at the time of the last full inspection. Pupils' behaviour and attendance have improved and more pupils are on track to achieve the progress expected of them. Nevertheless, you understand that the significant underachievement that remains must be addressed swiftly for pupils' achievement to be good.

You are pushing ahead steadily with actions to improve the quality of teaching. While teachers make greater use of assessment information to set tasks at the right level, rightly you have identified the need for more guidance to support mathematics teaching. It was evident in our visits to lessons that pupils make good use of the recently-purchased equipment when solving mathematical problems. The new arrangements for teaching mathematics in Key Stage 2 have increased the level of challenge for the most able pupils. The pupils welcome the improvements, but lack the individual targets necessary for them to know how to raise their attainment in the subject.

The governing body is improving the level of challenge it provides appropriately. Governors have a better understanding of what pupils should be expected to attain at different ages as a result of training provided by yourself and the local authority. The link governor for numeracy challenged the school effectively after attending Ofsted's Better Mathematics event. The link governor for literacy now has a better understanding of the difference that reading champions have made after evaluating the programme of support. The governing body shows suitable ambition to improve its effectiveness by seeking to commission an external review.

The school has a detailed plan of actions to tackle the most important weaknesses. A strength of the action plan is the clear arrangements that are in place for checking the difference that actions make. There are suitable interim objectives that set out the improvement required for pupils Years 2 and 6. These should be extended to include the other year groups. The current timescale and criteria to measure success in raising achievement do not meet the criteria for good.

You are developing the capacity of other leaders appropriately. The subject leaders for English and mathematics now take greater responsibility for their areas, but it is too early to gauge the difference they make. They now attend the regular meetings with the local authority to review the school's progress and check the quality of teaching and learning. The new members of the senior leadership team have improved their own practice following a visit to the partner primary school. However, their performance objectives have not been reviewed to ensure they reflect new responsibilities.

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 provides an appropriate level of support through an established programme initiated before the last full inspection. It checks closely how well the school is tackling the areas for development, but officers do not inform the school unequivocally whether things are improving fast enough. The school has drawn well on the support of an outstanding local primary school, brokered by the local authority. Two teachers have improved aspects of their practice as a result of observing teaching in the partner school. The diocese began supporting the school before the last full inspection and continues to work effectively with the school's leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector