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17 January 2014

Ms Kate Cameron, Debra Dettmar
Headteacher
Burley St Matthias Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Burley Road
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS4 2HY

Dear Ms Cameron, Ms Dettmar

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Burley St Matthias Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Leeds

Following my visit to your school on 16 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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:

- sharpen the information given to governors about the progress that pupils and groups of pupils are making
- develop more explicit targets for improvement, broken down into smaller steps so that governors and school leaders know how well the school is doing
- ensure a greater focus on the overall effectiveness of classroom practice in the plans for improvement and reports to governors.

Evidence

During my visit, I had conversations with you both and your middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. I also spoke with a linked headteacher from an outstanding school. The schools' plan for improvement was evaluated. A brief visit to all classrooms in the school was undertaken. Pupil progress data and other information about the schools performance was also looked at.

Main Findings

You and your team have made an effective start to getting your school to become good. This is because you have built on the work started before the last inspection, sharpened your focus and engaged key people in the process. You have taken prompt action to start to address the areas for improvement and have a plan to move forward. You have helped foster a change in the culture of the school. Staff now feel they are well supported, they are better able to support each other and have a shared understanding of what good looks like.

Actions to improve learning have been prioritised. The leadership team and staff have worked together to formulate and carry out a number of improvements since the recent inspection. These include identifying how marking and feedback can be improved to accelerate pupils learning. The findings from this review have been shared with staff and this has had a positive impact on what is now being seen in pupils' books. This work has been undertaken with reference to best practice and has also taken account of pupils' and teachers' views. Home reading and the books children are choosing has been reviewed and provision overhauled. You have established further external support with the help of the local authority and a successful headteacher from another school who is a National Leader in Education. Partnership work has included improving teaching and learning by ensuring work is correctly matched to pupils' abilities as well as providing support for middle leaders and school leaders.

Your plans for improving the school are appropriate. This is because they focus clearly on those areas identified in the recent inspection report and build on those areas that were already under development before the last inspection. The plans have been developed, shared and understood by all staff and governors. The actions to be undertaken are clear and progress to date has been noted. Governors have a defined responsibility for checking the progress being made within the plan. Some planned actions need further refinement, especially those relating to getting teaching to good or better. The plan does not have a clear enough focus on the overall improvement needed in the quality of teaching and learning and how this will be reported.

The governing body have an increasingly clear understanding of what the school needs to do to get to good. This, in part, is because of the drive and commitment of the Chair of Governors supported by others on the governing body. He is knowledgeable about the actions being undertaken by you and the senior leaders. Since the inspection the Chair has attended the 'Getting to Good' seminar and had several meetings with you to review the progress pupils are making. Governors, school leaders and local authority officers form a Joint Review Group to keep a tight watching brief on the progress the school is making. A review of governance has also been undertaken which has identified some areas for development including the access and use of data in governor's evaluation of the school. Governors have also overseen a review of how pupil premium funding is allocated across the school. The enhanced pupil tracking information now shared with governors will enable them to check that the plan is on course. Further work is required on the information provided to governors to support them in their judgements about the progress the school is making.

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 is providing effective support for the school. They know the school well and the Joint Review Group chaired by the School Improvement Adviser has met twice to help the school review progress since the inspection. The local authority has also brokered the support of an NLE to provide input from a successful school. This partnership is working well in moving the school forward.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Leeds [delete reference to DCS if the school is an academy] and as below.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Brown
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority - including where the school is an academy
- < Diocese - for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools