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Katherine Thompson
Headteacher
St Faith's CofE Primary School
25 Manor Road
Horsham St Faith
Norwich
NR10 3LF

Dear Mrs Thompson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Faith's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 7 February 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school's action plan is still not fully in place and is too complicated. Neither staff nor governors have been involved in the process of creating the plan. It has taken far too long to produce a working document to move the school to good. The school should take immediate action to:

- Make sure staff and governors are fully involved in deciding what actions will make a real difference to addressing the key issues from the section 5 inspection.
- Make sure that you, with the staff, regularly evaluate and update the action plan to reflect progress against the key issues.
- Make sure that governors are kept fully informed of the progress the school is making.
- Make sure that you drive improvement and helps staff understand the part they have to play in bringing this about.

- Make sure that you take the lead in helping staff and governors understand the progress pupils are making.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the other senior leader, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. We observed a sample of lessons from all teachers, some with a representative of the local authority at the school's request. We looked at pupils' books during lessons and some of the school's recent evaluation of pupils' progress.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection a teacher and a teaching assistant are on sickness leave.

Main findings

You have taken too long to finalise the action plan following the section 5 inspection. As a result, staff and governors do not have a clear understanding about how to make the required improvements. This was evident in our observations of teaching because not all teachers are assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding accurately. This means activities do not always provide enough challenge to the most able or support for those who need extra help. There is inconsistency in the quality of pupils' written work in mathematics and English. This is because teachers do not always set high enough expectations and as a result pupils do not take enough pride in their work. The teachers have not had sufficient training on assessment or marking and do not always set an example through the quality of their written comments. There is no whole-school approach to marking and although some pupils' are given clear instructions about how to improve their work this is not consistent within or across classes.

You have made some changes, but it is not clear how these have led to improvement. For example, you have started to group pupils for phonics (the sounds letters make) but the activities are not always helping pupils to read or spell better. You have recently bought new reading books so pupils have a wider choice of suitable books, but have not evaluated the impact of this on improving pupils' interest in and enjoyment of reading.

The governors have a very precise understanding of what the school must do to improve but they are not well enough informed about how you and the staff are going to bring about the required improvements.

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 giving the school a good level of support. The improvement group chaired by the school's intervention adviser has given good support to the governors. However the local authority audit of the school, carried out just before the last section 5 inspection, is an overgenerous account of the school's strengths and points for improvement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk local authority and the Diocese of Norwich.

Yours sincerely

Julie Winyard
Her Majesty's Inspector