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3 February 2014

Paul Davies
Headteacher
Grayshott Church of England Controlled Primary School
School Road
Hindhead
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Dear Mr Davies

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Grayshott Church of England Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 3 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The first monitoring visit took place in March 2013. An advisory visit was also undertaken by HMI on 14 October 2013.

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:

- accelerate improvements in teaching by providing more opportunities for senior leaders and teachers to model examples of good and outstanding practice
- ensure that pupils make faster rates of progress in the Reception Year.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the assistant headteacher. I also met with three governors, including the Chair of Governors and two representatives from the local authority. I observed teaching in all classes. Six lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher. I met with a group of Year 4 and Year 6 pupils and scrutinised a sample of pupils' books. Documents relating to the local authority monitoring visits and recent observations of teaching were evaluated.

Context

Since the first monitoring inspection four teachers have left the school. A new assistant headteacher took up her post at the beginning of January.

Main findings

Teaching and pupils' achievement have continued to improve following the first monitoring inspection in March 2013 and the advisory visit in October 2013. Although teaching still requires improvement overall, some outstanding teaching was observed during this monitoring inspection. Teachers are planning more effectively for the different abilities of pupils in their classes. In the best lessons, pupils of all abilities are challenged by tasks that make them think and investigate, deepening their knowledge and understanding. Teaching assistants now take more of an active part throughout the lesson, reinforcing key teaching points clearly and energetically with individuals and groups of pupils. However, in less successful lessons, some groups of pupils, including the most able and less able, make slower progress because teachers set tasks that are too easy or repetitive.

Some vibrant and exciting topic work in pupils' books demonstrates the improvements teachers and leaders have made to the curriculum. Pupils are now presenting their work more neatly, particularly in mathematics. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to demonstrate sustained literacy skills in longer pieces of writing.

Teaching still requires improvement in the Reception Year. There is evidence of better planning for learning and creative activities in the outdoor area. There are more opportunities for children to practise early writing skills. Their learning journals show evidence that they are being assessed more frequently and precisely. However, more needs to be done to ensure that children make rapid progress and establish a secure foundation for Year 1. Children in the Reception Year are not developing their communication and literacy skills sufficiently. There is not enough planned interaction with adults and expectations of children's early writing, reading and number skills are not high enough.

Leadership has been strengthened by the appointment of the new assistant headteacher, although there is more work to do to ensure that her role is fully developed to lead good practice in teaching. School leaders now check teaching more frequently and systematically. Evaluations of teaching are based on the impact on pupils' progress. Less than good teaching is followed up with support, further challenge and linked performance management targets. There was clear evidence during the monitoring inspection that many weaknesses in teaching have been tackled. However, teachers do not have enough opportunity to work together and learn from each other's day-to-day teaching.

Governors are now able to give a more focused account of their role in improving the school. They have implemented a monitoring plan, based on the school improvement plan. They have a greater understanding of how pupils' progress is tracked and evaluated and are able to ask challenging questions of school leaders with more confidence.

HMI will carry out a further monitoring inspection in the summer term of 2014.

External support

The school benefits from a comprehensive range of support and challenge provided by the local authority. The district manager and the leadership learning partner monitor the school's work frequently. School leaders are now selecting advice and support more shrewdly, in line with the school improvement plan. The local authority has provided useful guidance for English, mathematics and special educational needs. A specialist advisor has supported the school's work to improve provision in the Reception Year. The school continues to benefit from links with good and outstanding schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce
Her Majesty's Inspector