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Ian Collins
Headteacher
Trinity Church of England School, Belvedere
Erith Road
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Dear Mr Collins

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Trinity Church of England School, Belvedere

Following my visit to your school on 11 February 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:

- refine the post-Ofsted action plan to separate the responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating actions, and ensure that governors have a clear role
- evaluate the quality of teaching by drawing from a wider range of evidence
- ensure leaders increase the checks they make to monitor whether staff are implementing whole school priorities in a timely way.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other leaders, a group of teachers and a member of the local governing body, who is also Vice Chair of the Board of the Trust Directors to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We made brief visits to lessons to look at students' work. I evaluated the post-Ofsted action plan and reviewed other relevant documents. I also spoke with the Chair of the Local Governing Body and an external school improvement consultant before the visit.

Context

Since the last inspection three staff with specialist subject knowledge are delivering additional English, mathematics and science lessons to targeted Key Stage 4 students. A teacher has been appointed to develop Key Stage 3 students' literacy and numeracy skills. The heads of French and business studies have left and their roles are being covered by other middle leaders. A cross-school literacy coordinator post has been created and two teaching assistants appointed. A newly-qualified teacher has been appointed to teach French and an agency teacher is temporarily teaching religious education.

Main findings

You, your leaders and governors have responded quickly to tackle the areas for improvement highlighted in the section 5 report. The school's post-Ofsted action plan clearly outlines the steps you are taking to make improvements and includes milestones against which you can judge the impact of your work. However, in some instances there is insufficient distinction between particular staff's role in monitoring actions and in evaluating their impact. It is also not clear how governors will monitor and evaluate the impact of the actions.

Staff have received training on the aspects of teaching highlighted as areas for improvement at the last inspection. A new assessment policy is improving the way teachers mark students' written work, including their homework. Teachers are providing guidance to students about how to improve their learning and are beginning to use information about students' progress to plan work that is matched to students' different abilities. Nonetheless, leaders do not always check to ensure teachers are implementing changes quickly enough. As a result, inconsistencies in teachers' practice and students' learning remain. Teaching assistants are supporting students more effectively during lessons because teachers are sharing best practice on how to use this additional resource to improve students' learning.

The literacy coordinator has written a new literacy policy and quickly started to work with subject leaders and teachers to improve students' skills in extended writing. Students are being taught new techniques and subject-specific words to improve

their writing skills during lessons. You have started to help Year 11 students to improve how they prepare for examinations, through mentoring and examination skills' training. This is being used to help those identified as at risk of underachieving to perform well under examination conditions.

The deputy headteacher responsible for developing the quality of teaching has increased the number of lessons being observed. This is improving the accuracy of teaching records, and enables strengths to be shared and weaknesses to be tackled. Leaders understand that they need to scrutinise work in students' books and students' progress information, alongside learning observed in lessons to gain a robust and more accurate view of the quality of teaching. However, all of these sources of evidence are not always being used. This means judgements about the impact of teaching on students' learning are sometimes over-generous. The new whole-school 'tracking' system is helping staff to make better use of information to pinpoint the progress of individuals and student groups, including those in the sixth form. This system is also helping leaders to effectively hold teachers more effectively to account for the progress of the students they teach.

Members of the local governing body and directors of the Trust are determined to make improvements as swiftly as possible. They have visited the school on numerous occasions and reviewed the post-Ofsted action plan. Governors are in the process of commissioning external support to help them to be more objective in evaluating the impact of the school's work.

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 uses an external consultant. She has effectively supported leaders to identify the steps they need to take to implement the priorities in the action plan. The next step is to re-focus this support from giving advice, to coaching teachers and leaders so as to strengthen their capacity to deliver the changes required for the school to become good as quickly as possible.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Local Governing Body, the Chair of the Board of the Trust Directors, the Director of Children's Services for Bexley, the Diocese of Rochester, the Education Funding Agency, and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Pamela Fearnley
Her Majesty's Inspector