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Mandy Reeve
Acting Headteacher
Brockdish Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Grove Road
Brockdish
Diss
Norfolk
IP21 4JP

Dear Mrs Reeve

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

Following my visit to your school on 3 March 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 December 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 and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- reduce the number of actions identified to bring about improvement and sharpen them up to identify tight timescales and rigorous procedures for monitoring their impact so that all staff and governors know what is expected by when.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last

inspection. The school improvement plan and other monitoring information were evaluated. I made visits to both classes with you; I spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at their work.

Context

Since the last inspection, a new Chair of Governors and a new governor have been elected. A teaching assistant has left the school and a new teaching assistant has been appointed. A permanent teaching appointment has been made to replace the temporary teacher in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Year 1 and 2 class.

Main findings

Working closely with the local authority adviser, you have established a realistic view of the extent to which the school needs to improve. You have adjusted your action plan to address the areas identified for improvement. However, it does not set out clearly enough for staff what actions need to be taken to address priorities or how and when these will be measured. For example, not enough attention is paid to extending the quality of pupils recording in mathematics which is a priority.

You have taken actions to improve the quality and range of choice of activity available to the youngest children and improved the outdoor environment. However, this is still not used as well as it could be to help children learn rapidly in exciting and adventurous ways. You have written a new handwriting policy and decided on a scheme to make sure the approaches teachers take to teaching handwriting across the school build steadily on prior learning. As yet this has not been fully implemented. You have developed the programme for teaching phonics and assessment information shows that all pupils are on track to achieve the expected standard at the end of Year 1 and Year 2.

Although behaviour was judged to be good in the inspection, you have reviewed your behaviour policy with staff. Actions you have taken to manage the more challenging behaviour of a small number of pupils have been effective and the incidence of poor behaviour has reduced. You have also implemented more rigorous procedures to manage pupils' absence; as a consequence this has improved to be above the national average.

You are using the collaborative working relationships developed with two other local schools to make sure your judgements are accurate. You are also using these to provide staff with opportunities to observe other teachers and ways of working so that they can develop their practice.

The very recently elected Chair of the Governing Body has implemented changes that are already making a difference to the quality of strategic leadership. More governors have responsibility for ensuring improvement happens and are in a position to ask challenging questions and ensure available finances are used well to

improve pupils' learning and achievement rapidly. It is too early to see any impact of these changes as yet.

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

Shortly before the inspection, the local authority undertook a review of the school. As a result, an experienced adviser was allocated to provide you with mentoring and an induction programme was put in place. Support has been effective in establishing improved systems of data analysis, monitoring, self-evaluation and assessment; training has also been provided for governors. As a consequence of this intensive support, leadership is strengthening. Because of the continuing changes and the need for improvement to be rapid, the local authority is implementing an improvement board which will meet monthly.

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

Yours sincerely

Prue Rayner
Her Majesty's Inspector