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Mr Christopher Burton
St Peter's CofE (A) Primary School
School Lane
Caverswall
Stoke-on-Trent
ST11 9EN

Dear Mr Burton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Peter's CofE (A) Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 24 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 January 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are beginning to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and with three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body. I also met with a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated as well as examples of monitoring records. I considered recent minutes of the governing body as well as minutes from your meetings with the local authority.

Context

There have been no changes in staff since the section 5 inspection. A Local Leader of Education (a successful headteacher) is now providing support and challenge to school leaders and governors.

Main findings

You and the governing body accepted the findings from the inspection in January and know that leaders must ensure that all pupils are well taught so that they make good progress. Your action plan covers all of the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report but does not reflect the urgency with which the necessary improvements must be made. The plan does not clearly set out all the actions that you intend to take in order to improve teaching and raise achievement. However, the plan does not reflect the improvement work that is actually taking place. The plan should be amended to show the steps that you are taking and intend to take in order to ensure that the school is judged as good at its next inspection.

Since the section 5 inspection you have started to set more ambitious targets for pupils' progress and have made improvements to the way that you manage and evaluate the progress information that you collect. The move to half-termly meetings with teachers to review pupils' progress and targets is a good step forward. These more regular meetings mean that you are able to quickly identify those pupils who need further support in order to make good progress. However, when additional support is provided to individuals or groups, you are not yet measuring and evaluating the success of this support.

You have rightly focused on improving teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress. You are making more regular visits to classrooms to check that teachers are planning and setting work which builds upon what pupils already know, can do and understand. You are also making more frequent checks on the work in pupils' books. This is helping you to ensure that the work set by teachers provides challenge for pupils of all ability. Leaders are also regularly evaluating the impact of teachers' marking on pupils' learning. You are keeping records of these visits and checks and you are providing feedback to teachers, so that they know how to improve their work. You are beginning to use the information you have gathered about teaching in English and mathematics to identify where individual and whole-staff support is needed in order to ensure that teaching is consistently good.

The external review of governance recommended in the section 5 inspection has taken place but the written report is not yet available. Governors are keen to make the necessary improvements so that the school improves quickly. Minutes from meetings of the governing body now include examples of governors asking questions and beginning to hold school leaders to account. However, governors must ensure that they do not allow anything less than good progress, for any group of pupils, to go unchallenged. The governing body should make certain that they are clear about the purpose and impact of pupil premium funding. Governors acknowledge that they need further training in order to develop their knowledge and skills.

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

You are engaging positively with the support being provided to the school, by the local authority and by a Local leader of Education. The District Manager for Improvement now visits the school each half term to carry out joint monitoring activities and to evaluate the impact of the work of school leaders and governors. Training has already taken place to improve the accuracy and consistency of teachers' assessments in mathematics. The local authority has an accurate view of the school's strengths and of the areas which require improvement. It is providing effective support and challenge to the school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Staffordshire and as below.

Yours sincerely

Morag Kophamel
Her Majesty's Inspector