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Mrs Suzanne Hawley
Headteacher
Holyport CofE (Aided) Primary School
Stroud Farm Road
Holyport
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SL6 2LP

Dear Mrs Hawley

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Holyport CofE (Aided) Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 8 May 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 taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- review leadership roles and responsibilities and ensure appropriate development opportunities so that there is the capacity to sustain and build on improvement
- strengthen the action plan by adding quantifiable targets for pupils' achievement at key points; and ensure it stays on track by being clear when actions will take place, the resources needed and who will keep check on progress.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and your senior leaders, middle leaders, pupils, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority and diocese to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We walked around school together to see classes at work. I evaluated the action plan and looked at other key documents.

Context

The deputy headteacher is currently teaching a class to cover a maternity leave. She will share this responsibility from the beginning of June when another teacher is due to return from maternity leave.

Main findings

You and your governors have a clear sense of purpose and a determination to improve the quality of education for pupils at the school. The school's weaknesses had been identified prior to the inspection so you fully accept the improvements that are needed. The action plan is appropriately focused on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. It takes account of all the points for improvement identified in these areas during the inspection and sets out in detail the actions that will be taken and who is responsible. The plan does not specify however when the actions will take place and what resources are needed, or who will keep a check that they have happened. This means there is the potential for slippage. The plan is clear that the school has higher expectations of what pupils can achieve by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. It would benefit from quantifiable targets for each year group so that everyone is clear what they are working towards and what the milestones will be along the way. It would also be helpful to be more explicit about the school's expectations of the progress pupils will make each year and over time, and which groups should be targeted to make accelerated progress.

There has been concerted action to improve the quality of teaching so that all groups of pupils can make good progress. Training is appropriately focused and regular lesson observations help you to build a picture of teaching in each class over time and target further support where it is needed. Most recently, observations have focused on differentiation. It was clear from walking around school that work is differentiated. I suggested monitoring should look carefully at whether the different activities are closely matched to teachers' assessments of what pupils can do and what they need to learn next. The progress pupils at all levels make over time is a key indicator of the quality of teaching. We discussed the importance of analysing data promptly over the course of the year to give this evidence.

You recognise the need to develop a leadership structure that shares the load for driving improvement beyond yourself and your deputy. To this end, you have appointed phase leaders. Working alongside you has developed their understanding of how to improve their teams' teaching. Next they will take on more responsibility for monitoring pupils' progress. It would be helpful to review all leadership roles and responsibilities and detail how you will develop them further in your action plan.

Governors fully accept that they had not previously been rigorous enough in holding the school to account. They have taken appropriate action to improve their work since a review last summer. For example, a Progress Champion has been appointed to work with senior leaders to get the right level of detail and discussion about pupils' progress at meetings. The Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible for evaluating the impact of the action plan and governors know how they can check the evidence they receive is robust. We agreed the best time for another external review of governance would be towards the end of the summer when the new structures have been in place a year.

You have appointed a teacher as Pupil Premium Champion. She has established a clearer picture of who the eligible pupils are and the support they are getting. Their progress is reviewed at an individual level, but there is no strategic overview of the effectiveness and impact of different interventions. It is important that the recommended external review of pupil premium funding takes place as soon as possible so that governors can evaluate the school's work in this area and make informed decisions about future expenditure.

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 identified the school for additional support last school year and has continued to support it this year. A range of support, focused on the right issues, has been provided since the inspection, including signposting the school to good or better schools. You have also bought additional support from the diocese. You value the support from both the local authority and the diocese and that they liaise to make sure they complement each other's work.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Windsor and Maidenhead and the Diocese of Oxford.

Yours sincerely

Alison Storey
Her Majesty's Inspector