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Teresa Nouri
Headteacher
St George's Church of England Primary School
Coleman Road
Camberwell
London
SE5 7TF

Dear Mrs Nouri

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St George's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 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 February 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders, governors and the trustees are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- develop quickly the quality of literacy across the school, especially to improve pupils' writing and spelling
- sharpen the action plan by including regular milestones against which progress can be judged
- identify the persons who will support the school to development the actions in the plan and those who will monitor and evaluate the success of the action taken.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a staff governor, a group of teachers, a group of teaching assistants, the literacy co-ordinator and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also spoke with the headteacher of The Cathedral School of St Saviour and St Mary Overie (The Cathedral School), with a National Leader of Governance (NLG) and an independent education consultant. We scrutinised pupils' work and I evaluated your action plan and reviewed other relevant documentation.

Context

Since the last inspection, the numeracy coordinator has joined the senior leadership team and is now also the inclusion and data manager. A member of staff has returned to the school to teach Year 4.

Main findings

The school's action plan clearly outlines the actions required to address the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. It states the desired impact of each action to raise pupils' achievement and the resources required. However, it does not outline in detail what success will look like at each stage of the plan and those responsible for monitoring and evaluating the actions. Furthermore, the support given by different external partners is not always clearly identified to ensure the support received by teachers and leaders continues to be integrated and is not duplicated.

You have recently reorganised the roles and responsibilities of the teaching assistants in Years 1 to 6 to improve the impact of their support on pupils' achievement across the school. You have rightly identified their 'expert' skills and linked these to specific areas of pupils' learning, for example, speech and language, literacy and numeracy.

You are ensuring that the quality of teaching, especially of mathematics is quickly improving by using a medley of support. For example, providing teachers who need to improve their practice with personalised support plans and one to one coaching. You have set up opportunities for your teachers to visit The Cathedral School to observe good and outstanding teaching and to establish links between teachers who teach the same year group. Teachers from both schools will continue to work together to plan lessons jointly and to check the quality of pupils' work.

You are changing the way teachers give written guidance to pupils. They are beginning to write comments about the actions pupils need to take to improve their learning. However, marking is more effective in mathematics than in English. You

agree the support given and changes in teachers' classroom practice are not resulting in rapid enough improvements in pupils' literacy, especially their writing and spelling. Greater urgency and consistency is required to improve this aspect of the school's work.

Leaders' views of the quality of teaching are improving because you are using external support and the local authority officer to train the senior leaders to accurately assess and validate the school's judgements about the quality of teaching over time. You have also created a programme to formally monitor teaching which incorporates linking teaching observations with work in pupils' books and performance information about pupils' progress.

A new system for tracking the progress of individuals and different pupil groups is being used effectively by teachers and leaders. This is enabling senior leaders to ask more focussed questions about pupils' performance at the half termly pupil progress meetings. This is because leaders have better understanding about teachers' and pupils' performance.

Governors have commissioned an NLG to complete the review of governance and devise an action plan to make improvements quickly. For example, at the time of the visit, governors had audited their skills, appointed a professional clerk and reviewed the purpose of the committees. They are attending training in effective governance skills to gain the Bishop's Certificate in School Governance. Governors' awareness of their roles and responsibilities have improved since the last inspection.

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 supported well by the local authority, the headteacher of The Cathedral School, the education consultant and the primary advisor from the Diocese. The local authority has worked with the advisor from the Diocese to develop the skills of the senior team to judge teaching and to evaluate the impact of the school's actions. They linked you with The Cathedral School and the NLG to provide training and help for leaders, teachers and governors to increase the school's capacity to improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Pamela Fearnley
Her Majesty's Inspector