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Jackie Warren
Headteacher
William Gladstone Church of England Primary School
Holden Crescent
Newark
NG24 4HU

Dear Mrs Warren

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to William Gladstone Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 13 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 February 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, members of staff responsible for leading different aspects of the school's work, representatives of the governing body, including the Chair of Governors, and a representative of the local authority and the local leader of education providing support to the school. I toured the school, visited all classrooms and held discussions with some pupils. I evaluated the school's post-inspection action plan. I looked also at the school's latest data on the progress of the pupils and their attendance.

Context

There have been no significant changes at the school since the inspection, but there have been three recent appointments to the staff.

Main findings

You and the senior leaders at the school have focused effectively on the correct priorities, adapting your school improvement plan, so that it includes all of the areas for improvement from the inspection. You are making increasingly intelligent use of data about the progress of the pupils to identify particular aspects of teaching that need to be improved and also to check and to test the impact of the actions you are taking.

You took action promptly to restructure the staffing arrangements at the school, so that more, essential resources could be put into leadership and management. You and your colleagues are monitoring what is happening at the school more thoroughly than previously, which has led to more-frequent discussions with the teachers about their work and the progress of the pupils. As a result, you have been able to speed up improvements in the quality of teaching. Your own observations and those of people from outside the school indicate that the quality of teaching is getting better.

It was apparent from my discussions with the pupils that they are getting more opportunities to respond when the teachers mark their work. In addition, your own monitoring, supported by people from outside the school, indicates that the teachers are providing better comments and information to the pupils about how well they are doing.

You have put in place a broad range of activities and interventions, for example to improve the pupils' reading skills and their attendance, and for the benefit of more-able pupils. You are now looking for and analysing carefully the evidence you are collecting about how successful those activities and interventions have been. There are some early indications of particular successes, for example, in improving the pupils' reading skills.

The work you have done has had an impact on the pupils' attitudes to learning. They demonstrated enjoyment of reading and thoughtful approaches to literature. They show understanding of the importance of good attendance. The school's data indicate, currently, better rates of progress in all year groups than previously. Attendance has increased and there has been a marked reduction in the level of persistent absence.

The governing body has increased its activities to gain first-hand knowledge of the work of the school. As a result, it is able to contribute more to evaluating the progress being made. The review of governance has been delayed unavoidably; it is important that it is now completed promptly.

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 have benefited from a productive partnership with the local authority and a local leader of education, including a link with a good school. The external support that has been provided has been an essential component of the improvements made at the school. You are now, increasingly, taking the initiative yourself and identifying other, appropriate sources of support. The professional development opportunities that have been provided have led to notable improvements in the effectiveness of leaders and managers at William Gladstone CofE Primary.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector