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Katharine Hardwick
Headteacher
Churchfield Church of England VA Primary School
Cheshunt Wash
Cheshunt
Waltham Cross
EN8 0LU

Dear Mrs Hardwick

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Churchfield CofE VA Primary

Following my visit to your school on 17 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 in November 2013. 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:

- draw together the work of all staff by producing one tightly focused action plan which makes expectations of success and procedures through which these will be measured explicit to all including governors.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. We made short visits to all classes where I spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at their work. I met with the deputy headteacher and we visited the playgrounds to observe behaviour. You provided me with an extensive range of

monitoring and evaluation information including analysis of achievement data and the monitoring of teaching and learning.

Context

Since the inspection, the English Subject Leader has left the school, a new teacher has been appointed and the English leadership responsibility has been reallocated.

Main findings

Working closely with the deputy headteacher and governors, you have drawn carefully on local authority advice to take rigorous actions to drive improvement in teaching, learning and achievement. As a result, more teaching is good and achievement in Year 6 has strengthened. Analysis of progress across the school shows that it too is improving because teachers are using assessment more carefully to match their teaching to pupils' needs. The local authority has moderated assessment in Key Stage 1 and 2 and confirmed it as accurate. Despite these improvements, there are still some pockets of underachievement and not enough pupils are making good progress.

Your action plan is sharply focused on bringing about the necessary improvements. However, because other leaders have a range of different plans in place, the potential for you to achieve rigorous and rapid improvement is lessened. There is a risk that the very determined staff team will try to achieve too much at the same time and lose rigorous focus on the key areas for improvement.

You have welcomed support to improve assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this has been validated as accurate. While approaches still require improvement, we saw a very good example of assessment being used sharply by a teacher to identify how to support a child to use new skills and move on quickly in their learning.

You have established a thorough and comprehensive analysis of the quality of teaching which includes the impact of teaching on the progress pupils make and on the quality of their work. This is giving you a good understanding of where teaching is most effective and you know where it still needs to improve further. You are using a range of strategies to gather information but the feedback on the individual lessons you have observed does not include specific enough information on the progress made by different groups of pupils in lessons.

You have improved systems for sharing learning targets with pupils and these are used by all staff. Where these work best, pupils know what their targets are and understand what they need to do to reach them. In some classes, targets are effectively shared with parents so that they too can support their children to improve their skills.

You have reviewed the expectations of marking with teachers and there are some good examples of teacher's feedback to pupils moving their learning on. Work to develop how and when marking can be used most effectively in different subjects, so that the best use is made of teachers' time, is still in process and is an identified priority for next year.

The extent to which teaching assistants understand what is expected of them has been improved because you have put good procedures in place to manage their performance. During my visit, teaching assistants were providing effective support for the pupils they were working with.

Work led by the deputy headteacher has brought about significant improvement of the arrangements for monitoring and managing pupils' behaviour. Incidents of behaviour which do not meet the clear expectations set are recorded and tracked and analysis shows there is a decline in their occurrence. The management of behaviour at lunchtimes has improved, pupils and lunchtime supervisors say the new systems for supervision are working well. Pupils say they enjoy the range of opportunities, including the extra sports coaching, they are offered.

Minutes of governing body meetings show that they ask challenging questions, undertake relevant training and are not complacent about the position of the school. They check the accuracy of your judgements through the work of advisors and other leaders working with the school. Governors make concerted efforts to ensure funding is targeted at improving pupils' learning and achievement.

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 has provided a range of effective support which, as your expertise grows, you are starting to direct to where it is most needed. It monitors improvement through an 'action group' which meets half-termly to review progress and determine further support. The local authority has brokered additional leadership advice from other leaders in education and a professional partner. You are using this thoughtfully to enable you to refine the strategies you are using to bring about improvement and to ensure your judgements about the school are accurate.

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

Yours sincerely

Prue Rayner
Her Majesty's Inspector