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Jonathan Preston
Headteacher
Bayford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Ashdene Road
Bayford
Hertford
SG13 8PX

Dear Mr Preston

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bayford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 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 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. The school should take further action to:

- Raise the standard of pupils' writing in Years 3, 4 and 5.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, three members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also evaluated the school action plans and the school's assessment documentation. You accompanied me during visits to several classes in the school where we observed teaching and looked at pupils' work.

Context

Since the inspection two teachers have resigned and will leave the school at the end of the summer term. The school has appointed two teachers to replace them in September 2014.

Main findings

Your action plan prioritises the right areas for improvement. It clearly sets out the steps that you are taking to improve teaching. This includes teachers making visits to observe high quality teaching and working alongside teachers and advisors to ensure that their assessments are more accurate. Teachers that have already made such visits are incorporating the good practice that they have seen into their own work. You have also acted quickly, for example, to raise the quality of marking and pupils are now receiving better guidance about how they can improve their work.

Pupils' attainment is improving. Standards in reading and mathematics are now above age-related expectations for all year groups. This is also the case for writing in Years 2 and 6 but in Years 3, 4 and 5 standards are broadly in line with those expected for their age. The proportion of pupils likely to meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is broadly similar to the national average.

In recent years the assessments of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have indicated that the proportion meeting or exceeding the early learning goals is well above the national level. This is set to be repeated this year. Your tracking and assessment systems are not currently using this information to set aspirational targets for more able pupils as they progress through the school.

You are encouraging pupils to develop positive attitudes towards learning and this is having an impact: Pupils take pride in their work, presenting it well in the great majority of cases. In addition, pupils are quick to settle to their work and listen carefully to instructions. Despite an improvement in pupils' attendance, too many families continue to take holidays during term time.

The governing body have begun an external review of their work. Governors are more clearly holding school leaders to account and have improved their understanding of school data.

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 is providing a good level of support for the school. You are in regular contact with a local authority advisor and are making effective use of the support that is on offer. Links between local schools where good practice exists are established and visits are occurring. Local authority support with the management of assessment data has improved your understanding of where the school's strengths and areas of relative weakness lie.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Moodie

Her Majesty's Inspector