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19 June 2014

Mrs Elaine Harrison  
Headteacher  
Runcorn All Saints CoFE Primary School  
Church Street  
Runcorn  
Cheshire  
WA7 1LD

Dear Mrs Harrison

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Runcorn All Saints CoFE Primary School, Halton**

Following my visit to your school on 18 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 March 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:

- sharpen the school improvement plan so that rapid improvement can continue and the school become good or better at its next inspection by:
  - extending the plan into the next school year
  - including interim judgements so that the effectiveness of actions can be checked at significant points
  - including governors in those who are checking the plan's impact.
- ensure that pupils' targets, particularly at Key Stage 2, lead to precise information about individual pupils so that teachers can quickly adjust their teaching if any pupils are falling behind or need more challenge

- build more extensive links between the Governing Body and the local authority so that specialist knowledge about school effectiveness is more easily available.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you and the acting assistant headteacher, subject leaders for English and mathematics, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I talked with a group of five Year 6 pupils and met others around the school. I visited classrooms accompanied by you. I scrutinised documents including the school's plans for improvement, data on pupils' achievement and minutes of meetings of the Governing Body. I sampled work in Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils' books and examined other books in lessons.

## **Context**

The acting assistant headteacher who has been seconded for two terms will return to his own school in September. A new assistant headteacher with responsibility for teaching and learning has been appointed. An existing member of staff has had their contract extended to allow them to hear pupils read each afternoon.

## **Main findings**

Teaching is improving particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers are challenging pupils more in English, for example, by displaying keywords which pupils are then expected to use in their writing. In mathematics, teachers are setting more problems which link to real-life situations. This means that pupils are having to think harder. The timetable changes that were introduced shortly before the inspection have continued. More time is given to developing pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics. Pupils are expected to read at home every day. If they haven't done this, they spend some extra time reading in school. Pupils are being encouraged to read more at school because an adult has been appointed to hear them read each afternoon. The pupils I spoke with said that they are enjoying the extra reading and that it is helping them to improve. These new approaches are already helping pupils' achievement in English and mathematics to rise. The school's data shows that their progress is speeding up.

Teachers have set new targets for pupils. These have been in place longer for Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2. The Key Stage 1 targets are effective because they focus on the things individual pupils need to do to improve. In contrast, the targets for Key Stage 2 are set for small groups of pupils. This means they are not as helpful in ensuring that individuals do not fall behind or in deciding whether they need more challenging work.

Senior leaders have recently introduced a new marking policy. Teachers are expected to comment in ways which help pupils to respond. 'Fix-it time' in lessons is given for pupils to do this. These changes have not yet had time to be fully established. Pupils say that 'Fix-it time' is used mostly in English. I saw marking which was of variable quality.

Improvement in information and communication technology has been slow until recently. Teachers have been trained but the school needed new computers before work could start with pupils. A set of tablet computers ordered, on loan, from the local authority arrived on the day of this inspection. Governors have agreed to purchase similar computers and are considering whether to set up a new computer room.

Leadership is becoming more effective and leaders more confident. Senior and middle leaders are working more closely to ensure responsibilities are clear. Meetings to discuss pupils' progress have been extended to include the subject leaders for English and mathematics as well as senior leaders and class teachers. This is helping teachers to adjust their teaching if pupils' progress slows. Middle leaders have a greater role in checking the quality of teaching and learning as they observe practice in classrooms and check pupils' books. Leaders are starting to visit a local outstanding school to see effective practice. Leadership training is being offered, for example, for the special educational needs coordinator from the start of next term.

Senior leaders have rewritten the schools' improvement plan. Expectations of staff and pupils are higher, for example, more challenging work is being planned for the most able. This has led to faster progress. Improvements already started, such as the teaching of basic English and mathematics skills, have become embedded. Middle leaders have linked the plans for improvement in subjects to the school plan. This is helping to ensure that improvement is happening in all areas. However, it is not clear how the plan will ensure that enough progress will continue as it does not extend past this term, it lacks interim checks on progress and does not specify how governors are to be involved in checking that actions are effective.

Governors are aware of the needs of the school. They offer good support and have increased their challenge to senior and middle leaders. Additional meetings have been planned. Middle leaders are to attend a meeting of the Governing Body in order to review pupils' achievement. While governors know about the support local authority officers provide to school leaders they do not access the same amount of support themselves. The rapid changes in the school mean that this is an opportunity which is being missed. It will be particularly important as senior leadership further develops next school year.

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**

Local authority officers know the school well and provide effective support and appropriate challenge. Senior leaders asked the local authority to check that teachers had been accurate in the recent National Curriculum assessments. The check confirmed that this was the case. It also demonstrated the high levels of accountability senior leaders now expect. The local authority has supported the headteachers' initiative to work with Pewithall Primary School, a local highly effective school. A programme of visits to help improve leadership, teaching and learning, and information and communication technology has started.

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

Yours sincerely

David Selby

**Her Majesty's Inspector**