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Ms Sandra Medley
Headteacher
St Georges VA Church Primary School
Pastures Avenue
St Georges
Weston-super-Mare
BS22 7SA

Dear Ms Medley

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Georges VA Church Primary School

Following my visit to your school on Tuesday 24 June 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 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.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders, the Chair and two members of the governing body and a group of Year 6 pupils. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority. These conversations provided opportunities to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan and other documents were also evaluated.

Context

Following the inspection in March 2014, a new special educational needs coordinator has been appointed for September 2014. The current post holder is moving to work in another school. In addition, the role of three support staff has been reviewed and they are now working closely on intervention activities with designated classes.

Main findings

- Since the inspection, the school has acted quickly to implement appropriate improvement strategies. For instance, in May 2014, the school's senior leaders commissioned North Somerset local authority to conduct an external review of the school's use of its pupil premium funding. This is additional money provided to the school to support children in the care of the local authority and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The two-day review, which involved the school's senior leaders, provided a comprehensive scrutiny of the school's deployment of its pupil premium funding. It also evaluated the funding's impact on pupils' performance.
- The outcome of the external review confirmed the improvement priority identified in the school's inspection report about the need to reduce the attainment gap between different groups of pupils.
- To tackle this issue, the school's senior leaders are taking advantage of Ofsted's presentations to develop an awareness and understanding of successful strategies to bring about school improvement. They have also been proactive at identifying and learning from other schools that have been recognised as using their pupil premium funding successfully.
- The school's senior leaders have also constructed a detailed improvement plan that covers the areas identified in the recent inspection report. It is suitably challenging in that evidence of improvement is expected to be available by September 2014. To meet this deadline, the headteacher and school bursar are monitoring the impact of intervention strategies on increasing pupils' progress.
- The school has written a policy document setting out its aspirations to ensure that pupil premium pupils are enabled to succeed. The full governing body plan to review the policy during their meeting in July 2014.
- Senior leaders are providing targeted support for teachers identified as needing to improve their practice. There is a clear focus on ensuring that lessons engage pupils fully and challenge them to learn. The school's monitoring of teaching performance and pupil progress indicates that there are signs of improvement. The reports also acknowledge that further work is required to ensure that all pupils are routinely receiving the high quality teaching expected.
- Middle leaders are also actively involved in supporting the school's improvement work. The English subject leader is contributing strongly to the school's work by monitoring pupils' progress and working closely with senior leaders to improve pupils' reading experiences.

- Even though the school and the local community were disappointed with the inspection outcomes, morale at the school remains strong. Staff talk confidently about working together to strengthen and improve the school's performance.
- Pupils speak highly of the school and are positive about the quality of education they receive. They describe how teachers' marking of their work has improved in recent months. They also state that when teaching assistants mark their work it is not always completed to the same high standard.
- Parents praise the school's work and rate it highly. As a result, the school is very popular and over-subscribed.
- The school's leaders are taking action to improve the quality of information published on the school's website about the deployment and impact of the school's pupil premium funding.
- Similarly, the senior leaders have raised awareness of the issue with all the staff. They have also implemented successful strategies to work closely with parents and engage them in supporting pupils to learn.
- The governing body is working closely with the school's senior leaders to monitor the impact of the school's intervention strategies. To do so, the governors have created an additional committee that meets regularly to scrutinise the areas identified for improvement.
- The headteacher reports regularly to the governing body about pupils' achievement.
- The governors are fully aware of the areas where improvement is required and are committed to bringing about the higher quality teaching expected.
- Two governors have taken on additional responsibilities, which include monitoring the performance of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding. One of these governors also shadowed the external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding. As a result, the governor developed an insight into the issues faced by the school.

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 reacted quickly to the inspection findings and is providing high quality focused support and challenge to the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Ken Buxton
Her Majesty's Inspector