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7 July 2014

Ms Vicki Cann
Headteacher
Hilperton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Newleaze
Hilperton, Trowbridge
Wiltshire, BA14 7SB

Dear Ms Cann

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

Following my visit to your school on 7 July 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. The school should take further action to:

- Strengthen the work of subject leaders in evaluating the quality of teaching in English and mathematics. This will enable them to monitor more precisely the quality of teaching in their subject, and to give teachers developmental feedback.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I met with one governor who leads the curriculum committee. We talked through the action plan formulated by governors. You and I discussed the subject leadership of mathematics. I met separately with the subject leader for English. The school action

plan was evaluated. You gave me a tour of the school with short visits to classrooms.

Context

Since the inspection changes in staffing mean that there are two new appointments in place for September 2014. The children in the Reception class are currently being taught by a temporary teacher. The deputy headteacher, who is the subject leader for mathematics, is absent from school on sick leave.

Main findings

The inspection report of March 2014 recognised that you had already begun to make improvements to the school's performance. Your ambition and drive is clearly evident in the work you have started. Your concerted effort to raise expectations means that the teachers are held more accountable for the achievement of their pupils. Pupils are now making better progress in reading. Teachers are thinking more carefully about ensuring the work they set for more able pupils is challenging enough. The school has set up enrichment programmes in science and writing. You are listening to pupils' views about their learning. For example, the pupils have given teachers their thoughts on the termly topics taught. By making changes in response to their comments, you consider that boys are more interested and keen to learn.

You have put support plans in place to help some teachers improve their teaching and these actions have been particularly effective in Year 1. The subject leader for English has made a valuable contribution to improving teaching. She has advised the teacher on planning lessons which challenge all pupils to achieve as well as they can. However, subject leaders for English and mathematics have yet to observe teaching in their subjects and feedback development points so that teachers are better supported to improve. You have also focused on improving the teaching of phonics. Consequently, the pupils are better equipped when it comes to reading and spelling. All the pupils who retook the phonics test this year passed. This is a significant improvement from last year.

In pushing forward with school improvement, you are working well with a local teaching school. Consequently, you and your staff are successfully improving the quality of children's learning experiences in the Early Years Foundation Stage. During our tour of the school you highlighted the notable differences in how the outside learning area for the Reception class is organised. Boys, who were previously reluctant, are now keen to write because topics interest them. For example, recording goals scored in their own 'World Cup' tournament.

The school action plan focuses on the right things to improve teaching, such as expecting a consistent approach to marking in every class. There are timely review points at different stages according to each action. From your monitoring of teaching to date, There are improvements in the way that teachers mark pupils work. They

now give advice on the next steps. You reported that, as a result of attending an Ofsted 'Getting to Good' seminar recently, you have tightened up the timescales in your action plan further. This means that your plan is much clearer about when actions are to be completed and evaluated. However, the action plan needs to be developed further by adding in more specific actions related to subject leadership. For example, subject leaders for English and mathematics, require more training on observing teaching and providing feedback to teachers.

The governing body values the on-going dialogue with you about school improvement work. Governors report that they have a more active role in supporting and challenging the school as a result of the frank discussions. Consequently, governors have a clear view of what still needs to be done. The governing body has based your performance management targets on the school's improvement priorities. Their action plan focuses on the right things to improve school performance. We discussed how their plan would be even better if it was set out with the same headings as the school action plan so that timescales for checking the impact of actions match.

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 provides a good balance of support and challenge. The review meetings with the representative of the local authority provide an opportunity for all parties to share their evaluation of what is working well and the next steps. The local authority has arranged the support for school leaders from a local teaching school. This is having a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Neech
Her Majesty's Inspector