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16 July 2014

Mr J Rubba
Executive Headteacher
St Francis Church of England Primary School
Horspath Road
Oxford
OX4 2QT

Dear Mr Rubba

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Francis Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 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:

- ensure leaders' feedback to teachers after lesson observations fully reflects progress on the areas for improvement identified in previous observations.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, your deputy headteacher and middle leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We went on a tour of the school visiting every class and talked to pupils. I evaluated a range of documentation including the school

improvement plan, information relating to the monitoring of teaching, information about pupils' progress and records of governors' meetings. With your deputy I looked at a selection of pupils' books. A check was made of the single central record of staff vetting.

Context

The headteacher has very recently gone on maternity leave. You, a headteacher of a local school, have been appointed as executive headteacher until Christmas, working in the school four days a week. A new deputy headteacher joined in April. At the end of term three staff are leaving, to be replaced by three new staff, including an inclusion manager. There will be an additional Key Stage 2 class next term.

Main findings

The action plan focusses well on the areas for improvement. The actions are logical to bring about the required change. It is clear who is responsible for each action and the plan identifies small steps that can be checked on the way towards your longer term goals.

There is evidence of pupils making better progress in all key stages, including in writing and mathematics which were highlighted in your inspection report. However, there remains much work to be done to make sure that all pupils are progressing well, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The appointment of a new deputy headteacher has improved the capacity of the leadership team to move the school forward and improve teaching. The addition of yourself as executive headteacher is a sensible step to add to the school's leadership capacity whilst the headteacher is on leave.

Monitoring of teaching by senior leaders, along with training for all staff, is making a positive impact on the classrooms. For example, on our learning walk your deputy headteacher was able to point out the addition of helpful prompts in classrooms for pupils on questioning, and the record of staff training shows a good focus on using question in lessons. It is good to see that when lessons are observed by leaders, more careful attention is paid to the progress of groups of pupils in the lesson and over time, when evaluating the quality of teaching.

I am pleased to see that subject leaders are beginning to play more of a role in the monitoring of teaching, through checking pupils' work in books and analysing records of their progress over time. The deputy headteacher is providing a strong model of subject leadership.

Senior leaders are taking effective steps to improve the quality of teaching and robustly tackling ineffective teaching. However, the feedback after lesson observations does not always reflect back fully enough the areas for improvement identified in previous lesson observations. This needs to be sharpened up if the pace of change in teaching is to accelerate.

Governors are building well on the feedback from the external review to improve their work. When governors visit the school they are beginning to look more at how teaching is helping pupils to learn. Data is starting to be examined more closely by governors to help evaluate the impact of the school's work, and of additional pupil premium funding.

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 effective input through contributions to the development plan, brokering support from you as executive headteacher and providing access to subject consultants. The right regularity of meetings to check the impact of these measures has been established.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona Bridger-Wilkinson
Seconded Inspector