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18 September 2014

Mrs Victoria Norris
Headteacher
Caston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
The Street
Caston
Attleborough
NR17 1DD

Dear Mrs Norris

Special measures monitoring inspection of Caston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 September 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with yourself, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and a representative of the diocese of Norwich. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the last inspection, a number of teachers and teaching assistants have been appointed to replace those that left last term. Three associate governors have been recruited to the governing body.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The local authority statement of action and the school action plan are not fit for purpose because they do not tackle with sufficient urgency the main priority for this school, which is to secure the future primary education for the pupils who attend. It is taking too long for the key stakeholders, including the Diocese of Norwich, the local authority and the governors, to decide the future of the school. This hinders you and the governors as you try to improve the quality of teaching and learning. It is essential that, by the next monitoring inspection, decisions for the future of the school and a plan, with milestones, are agreed.

The local authority statement of action and the school improvement plans are helpful in prioritising the necessary short-term improvements to teaching and learning. Some effective action has been taken by you as a consequence. For example, new teachers and teaching assistants have been appointed to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning. However, many of these are temporary appointments. This term, supported by a National Leader of Education, you are already assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the new teaching team in order to decide what training is required. Management systems are now in place for the performance management of teachers and for assessing pupils' progress. You have ensured that there is a much better environment for learning, and this has already improved the behaviour of pupils.

The Chair of the Governing Body has taken a determined approach to strengthening governance. She works closely with you to check that the action being taken to improve teaching is appropriate. New associate governors have been appointed to provide additional expertise. All governors now take part in training and have a better understanding of their responsibilities than in the past.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is not fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk and the Director of Education for the Diocese of Norwich. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Pete Sewell
Associate Inspector