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30 September 2014

Ms Mary Dolan
Executive headteacher
Blakeney Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Wiveton Road
Blakeney
Holt
Norfolk
NR25 7NJ

Dear Ms Dolan

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Blakeney Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 26 September 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 July 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:

- include external monitoring and evaluation in the action plan
- be precise in the action plan about what needs to improve in teaching and mathematics.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, a class teacher, the Chair of the Governing Body with two other governors, and a representative from the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the previous inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. I visited both classes and looked at pupils' work.

Context

One of the classes continues to be taught by a temporary teacher to cover the long-term planned absence of the class teacher. The recent, unexpected long-term absence of the teacher in the second class is also covered by a temporary teacher.

Main findings

The inspection report acknowledges the hard work that has already been done to improve the school. There were no surprises. Most of the points identified during for improvement during the inspection were already part of the action plan for the federation. The details for what needs to be done at this particular school have been added where needed but are not precise enough to target support to particular groups, subjects or staff. Work on this is already underway to get to the heart of what needs to be done to address the weaknesses in mathematics and teaching. The plan also lacks arrangements for external checks and views on the impact of the actions taken. Targets are appropriately set to aim for pupils' good or better achievement, linked to high quality teaching.

The drive for improvement continues with the same determination this term as in the summer term. Senior leaders have made sure that staff focus on the most important things.

- Pupils' books show high expectations for good quality work and teachers' marking that gives useful feedback.
- Having used previous training to develop their skills, support staff are an active part of the teaching team.
- Staff make sure that displays of work help pupils find out things for themselves and to see how their current work builds on what they have already learned.
- The way that pupils' knowledge of phonics is recorded and tracked has been revised, and provides staff with richer information about how well pupils learn to read and spell.
- Although there is still a lot to do to improve the outdoor learning area for the youngest children, the addition of a canopy has made this a more useful space.

The staff benefit from being part of the Pilgrim Federation of four small schools. Staff across the federation used the inspection of this school to reflect on their practice for all pupils in the federation. For the teachers new to this school, this is a particular source of support. Corporate systems and procedures for assessment and monitoring provide staff with secure and frequent information about how well pupils achieve and where the gaps in attainment and progress lie. As identified in the inspection report, governance across the federation is strong. Governors have a good understanding of what needs to improve and what to look for when they visit school or look at data.

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

Together with the Chair of the Governing Body, you are discussing with the local authority the future support from advisers and consultants.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk and the Diocese of Norwich and as below.

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- Diocese