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14 October 2014

Mrs Marian Hodgson  
Headteacher  
St Philip's Church of England Controlled Primary School  
Church Road  
Litherland  
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Dear Mrs Hodgson

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Philip's Church of England Controlled Primary School, Sefton**

Following my visit to your school on 13 October 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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 June 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 help governors check and evaluate the impact of actions more effectively by:

- ensuring the action plan has sufficiently measurable success criteria and milestones
- collating and presenting the evidence of impact succinctly.

***Evidence***

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, three representatives of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. In addition, the inspector visited every classroom and was accompanied by the head and assistant headteacher. The focus of these visits was to judge the impact of actions taken to improve the school and to scrutinise work in pupils' books.

## **Context**

The governing body is in the process of being reconstituted. Three governors have resigned and have not been replaced.

Two teachers returned from maternity leave in September 2014. One teacher is currently on long term absence.

## **Main findings**

Senior leaders and governors have implemented immediate actions to improve the school. As a result, all staff clearly understood their responsibilities in securing this improvement. The school's action plan contains appropriate objectives for improvement. However, milestones and success criteria in the plan are not sharp enough in order for governors to check that the plan is working.

Governors who met the inspector were clear about the impact of actions taken. They were also clear about future actions. This is because the headteacher and senior leaders regularly keep them informed. Governors' awareness is enhanced by their frequent visits to the school to speak with pupils and staff. Governors say, and the inspector agrees, that the collation and presentation of evidence needs improving in order for them to check more precisely.

Following several thorough evaluations, improvements have been made to the school's marking policy. Senior leaders set clear non-negotiable expectations of teachers. This is resulting in better quality marking and improved guidance for pupils, particularly in English and mathematics. To ensure the policy is applied consistently and effectively, leaders have increased the frequency and range of their checks. Consequently leaders have a clearer understanding where marking is used effectively and where it needs to be improved further. Changes to how the school day is organised means teachers and other adults are now able to provide timely feedback to pupils on how to improve their work and give pupils time to act upon this advice. Pupils' work shows that this is accelerating their progress.

The revised planning format has eradicated inconsistencies in the style of teachers' planning. This is leading to improvements in the quality of planning because subject leaders can check it more easily, identify issues earlier and implement appropriate training. As a consequence, the tasks and work set are more accurately matched to what pupils are capable of.

Focused visits to partner schools have provided teachers with opportunities to see good practice and feedback to colleagues what they have learnt. Senior leaders say this is improving the quality of teaching. For instance the better use of working walls is supporting pupils' learning in English and mathematics with the result that the learning is improving.

Senior leaders have redeployed teaching assistants effectively in order to maximise their impact on pupils' learning. Consequently, teaching assistants are better informed about what is expected of them. In addition, they have more opportunity to increase their skills because leaders require them to attend staff meetings and training events. Sharper performance management targets linked directly to pupil's progress means teaching assistants are now held to account more rigorously.

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 school makes good use of the effective support the local authority provides. This has included the use of English and mathematics consultants to support improvements in leadership and teaching. Effective links have been established with partner schools and a national leader in education. This means there are more opportunities for staff to see good and outstanding practice and access appropriate training and support.

The school adviser provides an accurate external view of the school's progress. The adviser ensures the school has access to the help it needs.

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

Yours sincerely

John Nixon

**Her Majesty's Inspector**