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4 November 2014

Mr Paul Lavis
Headteacher
Shaftesbury Church of England Primary School
Wincombe Lane
Shaftesbury
SP7 8PZ

Dear Mr Lavis,

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

Following my visit to your school on 4 November 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:

- introduce a timeline alongside the school action plan that clearly illustrates for all stakeholders the progress being made, successes and remaining work to be completed
- implement the cycle for checking on the quality of teaching so that individual teacher's performance can be closely monitored by middle and senior leaders and governors.

Evidence

During the visit I met with you, your senior leaders, the local authority representative and members of the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the most recent inspection. Together we carried out brief visits to lessons, and spoke with pupils. The current school improvement plan was also evaluated.

Context

Two newly qualified teachers have been appointed since the inspection. A restructuring of teaching staff has reduced the school's reliance on temporary teachers to cover staff absence. A new Chair and Vice Chair of Governors have been appointed along with two further community governors appointed by the local authority.

Main findings

You are working closely with your staff to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils' might achieve. You have rightly focused on raising the aspirations of teachers by focusing on improving teachers' skills in order to secure good teaching consistently throughout the school. You are in no doubt that improved outcomes for pupils fundamentally depend on the school securing consistently good teaching on a daily basis. To this end the monitoring of pupils' progress has been carefully reviewed by your senior leaders. The school's most recent checks on pupils' progress indicate improved rates of progress for pupils, especially for those in Year 2.

You have successfully introduced a school improvement plan that includes the recommendations made in the inspection report. For example, currently you are reviewing the way teachers mark pupils' work and explain to pupils how they might improve their work further. This strategy is at an early stage of development and has yet to have a measurable impact on improving pupils' learning. The school action plan lacks a timeline. Consequently staff, governors, the local authority and parents are unclear about how much progress the school is making.

You have provided your senior leaders with training and opportunities to coach less experienced colleagues in order to develop their strategic leadership role in the school. Together with your senior leaders you are developing the work of middle leaders to expand their role to improve teaching in their subject areas. This focus has led to better informed professional conversations between leaders about the quality of teaching taking place within the school. As a result, you and your governors are provided with a clearer understanding of the impact the school improvement initiatives.

Members of the governing body who met with me confirmed the inspection has resulted in all staff working much more closely together, with raised expectations of what pupils might achieve. Governors have full confidence in you and the work you

and your senior leaders are doing and so do I. You are aware of the importance of establishing as quickly as possible a cycle for checking on the performance of all staff in the school. You have not fully implemented regular checks on teachers' performance which means you are unable to fully identify for all staff the support and, if necessary challenge they required to secure rapid and sustainable improvements in teaching.

The good communications that already exist between you, your senior leaders and governors are being further enhanced through the linking of governors with subject leaders. Governors who spoke with me confirm the strengthened communication channels with you and senior leaders means they are able to ask more challenging questions in order to hold the school more effectively to account.

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 has provided timely support to the headteacher and other leaders. For example, the local authority representative has worked along side the headteacher to sharpen the school improvement plan. The local authority representative will also attend the governors' monitoring group set up to check on how well the school is addressing areas for improvement. The local authority has also brokered support with a nearby teaching school in order to further strengthen the quality of teaching and with another another school to focus on marking and feedback. An early years adviser has also provided support. New governors are receiving appropriate training and support from the local authority in order to become more confident in their roles.

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

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector