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29 January 2015

Mrs Charlotte Hickerton
Headteacher
The Lincoln St Peter at Gowts Church of England Primary School
Pennell Street
Lincoln
LN5 7TA

Dear Mrs Hickerton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Lincoln St Peter at Gowts Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 28 January 2015, 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 October 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 that the most-able pupils are challenged to reach their potential, especially in mathematics
- ensure that pupils are given further opportunities to develop their reading and mathematics skills in a wide range of subjects.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with senior leaders, the leaders responsible for English and mathematics, two members of the interim executive board, a representative of the local authority, and eight pupils from Key Stage 2, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated your plans for improvement. I reviewed your most recent data relating to pupils' achievement. I

visited each class and considered the quality of pupils' learning in a range of subjects. I looked at the information which the school provides for parents and carers, including that held on its website. I looked at the school's documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection in October 2014 the interim executive board has made two appointments. A new headteacher has been appointed who took up her position in January 2015. She has replaced the interim headteacher, who led the school during the summer and autumn terms of 2014. The former interim headteacher continues to support the senior leadership team for one day per week. A new teacher of Year 3 pupils has replaced a former member of staff who resigned from his position at the end of the autumn term 2014. The interim executive board has continued to govern the school since the last inspection. However, governance will transfer to a newly appointed governing body on 1 April 2015. Five members of the new governing body have started to shadow the work of the interim executive board.

Main findings

Working closely with the former interim headteacher, you have put in place a framework which is enabling senior leaders to undertake closer checks on the quality of the school's work. Your findings have informed your next steps, which are clearly set out in the school's improvement plan. This includes a programme of training for teachers. The initial professional development activities have been successful in starting to address some of the shortcomings in teachers' practice. As a result, they are becoming more skilled at making judgements about the level at which each pupil is working, particular in writing. They are using this information to plan work which is more challenging for pupils and enables them to make faster progress. Pupils say that teachers are making their expectations about the amount and standard of work clearer to them and this is helping them to achieve more. Pupils are given a greater say in evaluating how well they have done. Pupils consider that this is motivating them to achieve their 'keys to success' by the end of each lesson. Nevertheless, pupils say that the work is not always hard enough in mathematics. Workbooks show that the most-able pupils in mathematics are not being challenged as well as they might. Pupils are not given enough activities to help them to develop and apply their skills in reading and mathematics in a wide range of subjects. This is limiting the amount of progress that they are making.

The interim executive board has continued to provide strong leadership. It has made key decisions and taken effective action in relation to: staff appointments; involving parents more in the life of the school; and the appointment and training of new governors. Consequently, the interim executive board has ensured that the school is in a stronger position to move forward than at the time of the most recent inspection.

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 continues to provide effective support to the school. Initially, the interim headteacher was provided with a range of support to help teachers to improve their practice. This included the brokering of support from Waddington Primary School. Teachers have benefited from working alongside colleagues who have visited the school. This has raised the expectations of teachers of what pupils can achieve. More recently, the local authority has ensured that the new headteacher is supported by appointing the former interim headteacher as her mentor. Staff say that this has resulted in a continuity of approach that has created a sense of stability in the school. Consequently, staff say that they are fully supportive of the new headteacher in moving the school forward. The Diocese of Lincoln has provided effective support in reviewing the school's work in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It has ensured that more emphasis is placed in the curriculum on promoting the values of Christianity, while ensuring that pupils develop a better understanding and tolerance of those with different faiths. This is helping to ensure that pupils are better prepared for life in modern Britain.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, the Diocesan Director of Education for Lincoln, and the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire.

Yours sincerely

David Carter
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools