

PROTECT-INSPECTION

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6 February 2015

Mrs Lynn Trigg
The Headteacher
St Michael's Church of England Primary School
88 Camden Street
London
NW1 0JA

Dear Mrs Trigg

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Friday 6 February 2015

Following my visit to your school on 6 February 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 November 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:

- increase the quality of observation records and feedback to teachers by focusing sharply on the key features of good teaching and linking them to the impact pupils' learning to ensure consistency and inform training and development.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, and a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor and, two representatives from the local authority, including the School Improvement Partner and the Head of Learning, Improvement and Partnership to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also scrutinised various documents including minutes of governors' meetings, the summary report on

the pupil premium, the local authority's review of the school's work and minutes of St Michael's project team meeting; observation records of teaching and a small sample of pupils' work in literacy and numeracy.

During my tour of the school with you, we went into every classroom where pupils, as part of the daily routine before lessons begin, were working on a range of literacy and numeracy activities.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the staffing and numbers of pupils on roll have not changed. Following the consecration of the previous Chair of the Governing Body, the governing body reconstituted in December 2014 and the Vice-Chair was elected as the new leader. Senior leaders have brokered links with Eleanor Palmer Primary School. This outstanding school is also a teaching school.

Main findings

Everyone that I spoke to agreed that although the inspection judgement was a surprise, it has led staff and governors to focusing more sharply on improving consistency in teaching. You were all clear that sustaining better quality teaching is now the primary aim of the drive to improve achievement. This is evident in the rapid improvement plan which shows evidence of careful planning but interim measures are not included.

You and other leaders have not wasted any time in working on the areas requiring improvement. Your planning is more strategic in all areas of work. For example, your use and analysis of various literacy and numeracy interventions to accelerate pupils' learning led you all to conclude that high quality teaching is the best strategy. As a result, you are now looking at how best to increase the capacity of teachers. You have used local and national research and training well to identify ways of using pupil premium funding effectively. Your work with the Chair of the Governing Body has also helped to highlight shortcomings in teaching.

Teachers at the school are benefiting from the links with Eleanor Palmer Primary School. Middle leaders report an increasing grasp of monitoring work and developing the teaching of mathematics and literacy. Ongoing research work at the Institute of Education is contributing to staff and pupils critiquing and developing the quality of teaching and support provided in lessons. Work with the literacy consultant and outstanding provider has had an impact. For example, teachers are clearer about setting targets; literacy and numeracy skills are now better integrated across subjects. You report that pupils can see the links and expectations of pupils' work are higher. Pupils spoke positively about the marking but also indicated that their work should be challenging all the time. My scrutiny of pupils' books showed that the quality of work and marking in English is better than in mathematics. My discussion with pupils indicated that they prefer English which they described as 'fun' to learn.

You agreed with me that more needs to be done in mathematics because so few described it as a favourite subject.

The new Chair of the governing body knows the school well and is clear about holding you and all staff to account for pupils' achievements. Following the governors' scrutiny of the recent test results for disadvantaged pupils, a clear message about consistently good teaching was emphasised. Furthermore, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is now on the agenda of governors' meeting and a recently appointed governor intends to champion their cause. These changes are quite recent to see tangible impact but your governors have given unambiguous messages that only good teaching and outcomes are expected.

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

Following the inspection, the local authority's has increased its support and work in the school. Middle leaders are responding positively to the support and training provided by the literacy and numeracy consultants. Planned training is also identified for the new governing body. The recent review of the school's effectiveness is contributing to reinforcing the need for consistency in teaching. The Project Board meetings, although new, is ensuring leaders are answerable to the local authority and diocese for pupils' achievement.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Camden local authority and as below.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney
Her Majesty's Inspector