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Mrs Catherine Warland
St John The Divine Church of England Primary School
Warham Street
Camberwell New Road
London
SE5 0SX

Dear Mrs Warland

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St John The Divine Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 June 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 December 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:

- develop governors' monitoring skills, including their ability to use assessment information effectively, so they have an accurate understanding of the school's improvement.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, senior and middle leaders, pupils from Key Stage 2, a representative from the local authority and the diocese and four members of the governing body, including the Chair of Governors, to discuss actions taken since the last inspection.

I examined school improvement documents, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, safeguarding records and governing body minutes. I looked at pupils' current achievement data as well as published information. You accompanied me during visits to classes, where we observed teaching from Nursery through to Year 6 and looked at pupils' work.

Context

Since the inspection one teacher has left and two new teachers have been appointed.

Main findings

Leaders have developed a detailed improvement plan to tackle the areas for development identified at the most recent inspection. The progress made is checked weekly by the headteacher to ensure that rapid improvements are taking place. This monitoring information is shared systematically with governors, the local authority, the diocese and senior leaders.

Performance management is used to set clear targets to improve practice and tackle weaker teaching. Teachers are accessing well selected training and are acting on advice following monitoring activities. This is improving the quality of teaching. Leaders have introduced a system to track the progress of individual pupils more effectively. Moderations are taking place to ensure the information on pupils' attainment is accurate. Leaders at all levels are aware that better use needs to be made of the assessment information to increase teachers' awareness and accountability for pupils' progress. Governors are aware that they need further training to be able to hold the school to account for pupils' achievement more effectively.

Changes in the leadership of the early years are beginning to secure consistency in the quality of teaching between Nursery and Reception classes. There is a better range of activities to engage the interest of all pupils, including boys and those who are disadvantaged. As a result, previous gaps between the achievement of boys and girls, and between disadvantaged pupils and others, are closing. Leaders are aware that further development is needed to improve provision in the outdoor area to promote children's learning, particularly in reading and writing.

Middle leaders have benefited from training to help them carry out their leadership responsibilities. Leaders of mathematics and literacy regularly monitor learning in their area of responsibility. They provide planning support and demonstrate good teaching to improve provision where needed. Teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. Work is matched more closely to the range of pupils' abilities in classes, particularly in mathematics. Teachers' questioning skills are improving and pupils are encouraged to think more reflectively to deepen their understanding.

Pupils are given opportunities to respond to feedback from teachers. In mathematics, this often involves solving an additional challenge to stretch pupils' learning further. This is becoming more consistent across the classes.

The governing body has been strengthened by the recent appointment of an experienced governor. Governors visit school regularly and are beginning to focus more effectively on specific aspects of the school's work through their individual link roles. Governors acknowledge that they need to develop their skills further to monitor school improvement more robustly.

Leaders have worked with external professionals to ensure the school's website is more easily accessible to parents. The work has now been finalised and the website is due to be launched in the next few weeks.

External support

The local authority has established an action group to monitor the school's progress towards improving the areas for development identified in the recent inspection. Two visits have been made by link advisors to review teaching and learning across the school. An early years advisor has made regular visits to develop the practice and provision in the Reception and Nursery classes. Leaders have used the recommendations from each of these visits to make further improvements.

The diocese has supported the school with recruitment. The school's diocesan link advisor provides additional coaching support for the headteacher when needed.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Lambeth and Director of Education of the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education.

Yours sincerely

Mel Rose
Her Majesty's Inspector