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Daniel Woodrow
Headteacher
St Gregory Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Church Street
Sudbury
CO10 2BJ

Dear Mr Woodrow

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Gregory Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 30 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 March 2015. 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 all pupils are adequately challenged, with high expectations expressed by teachers.
- Provide teachers with the necessary additional support and training to ensure that their lessons promote high quality learning for all pupils.
- Develop subject leadership, resulting in improved outcomes in all national curriculum subjects.
- Respond to the findings of the governance and pupil premium reviews, with actions that result in rapid impact on the effectiveness of support and provision.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, the senior leader responsible for mathematics, the governing body and a representative

of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school action plans were evaluated. We carried out an extended tour of the school together and observed the quality of teaching, spoke to pupils and looked at books. With the deputy headteacher, we discussed the provisional data for 2015 and the key characteristics of the school.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection the Nursery teacher has taken maternity leave and has been replaced with a newly qualified teacher. As this is a 'mornings only' provision, she also provides release time for senior leaders. The religious education teacher is on extended leave. The governing body is not complete and has recently appointed a new parent governor, a vacancy remains for a local authority governor.

The deputy headteacher is leaving at the end of the summer term and has not yet been replaced. An interim teacher will cover her teaching responsibility and her leadership duties will be devolved to other members of the senior leadership team until a substantive deputy is appointed.

Main findings

During your short time with the school, you have galvanised the leadership and teaching teams and have a very clear understanding of the necessary aims and actions required to improve the school. This has resulted in improved attainment and progress data for 2015. You are aware that there are still many areas to address and approach this in a systematic fashion, effectively prioritising the areas for improvement that impact most directly on pupils' learning.

The action plan and Ofsted action plan each provide clear objectives that will improve pupils' outcomes in key areas. The involvement of all teaching staff has supported a whole school determination to improve and there is evidence of positive impact in the majority of classes.

Behaviour remains a strength of the school and is improving. Pupils' attitudes to their learning have become more reflective since March and this is a result of the new marking and feedback scheme. Pupils enjoy responding to teachers' comments and see value in referencing the previous improvement comment into their current piece of work. This procedure is having most impact in the classes where it is used consistently well. The improved presentation in books, which are now ordered and neat, reflects the fact that pupils are responding positively to teachers' higher expectations. Pupils are also producing more written work that reflects their better learning and increased subject knowledge, skills and understanding. You are aware that this needs to be seen more widely across all national curriculum subjects.

Teachers have altered the topics within the curriculum to promote the better engagement of boys. The writing activity in Year 4 and 5, a chronological report on David Beckham, was evidence of this. Your teachers have been trained to deliver English in a more dynamic fashion; this is starting to support better attainment and progress for boys.

The governing body has led the school through a period of change and uncertainty. There are a number of new governors and it is imperative that the planned review informs further practice and improvements.

Early Years provision is improving. You recognise that further support is required to ensure that this provision meets the learning needs of all groups of pupils.

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

External support

The local authority has provided suitable on-going support, particularly with your new headteacher induction. The Suffolk challenge partner has supported the creation of the post-Ofsted action plan and has provided professional development for your staff. Support in improving the Early Years Foundation Stage has led to some improvements; this needs to continue. The local authority's standards and excellence officer has reviewed aspects of the school such as the website and baseline assessments. The diocese provides headteacher performance management and will be conducting the review of governance. The pupil premium review is being facilitated by an academy trust within the eastern region.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk and the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Pargeter
Associate Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- cc. Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- cc. Local authority
- cc. Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools