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24 June 2015

Mrs Kira Nicholls  
Headteacher  
St Paul's Community Primary and Nursery School, Spalding  
Queen's Road  
Spalding  
Lincolnshire  
PE11 2JQ

Dear Mrs Nicholls

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Paul's Community Primary and Nursery School, Spalding**

Following my visit to your school on 23 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 February 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- quickly ensure the curriculum builds on pupils' previous learning and equips them with the skills they need to attain well in all subjects
- improve the management of pupil performance data so that school leaders can more effectively monitor the impact of teaching over time on different groups of pupils
- make sure that all leaders and managers are held to account for the impact of their work in bringing about improvements
- make use of the best teaching in the school so that teaching over time in all years is consistently good.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher and groups of teachers to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met with the education adviser supporting the school on behalf of the local authority and a local leader of education who is working with the school. I spoke to the Chair of the Governing Body on the telephone and met with other governors. The school improvement plan and records regarding pupils' behaviour and safety were evaluated. You accompanied me on short visits to six lessons.

## **Context**

Since the Section 5 inspection, two teachers have left the school. Their posts have been filled by two teachers who joined the school at the start of the Summer term.

## **Main findings**

In the time since the section 5 inspection, school leaders and governors have not secured the improvements needed quickly enough to tackle inconsistencies in pupils' achievement. As a result, pupils' achievement remains too variable. The school's data suggest that attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics is likely to be significantly lower than last year overall. Results from the recent Year 1 screening check in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) also show a dip in attainment. Data in other years, for example in Year 1 and Year 5 indicate that not enough pupils are making the progress they should. Progress for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has slowed.

Improvements in achievement have been secured in Year 6 and in the early years. Teacher assessments in Year 6 show that the proportion of pupils securing Level 4 and above in reading, writing and mathematics combined is likely to increase compared to last year. In addition, the proportion of pupils predicted to achieve Level 5 and above in all three subjects is close to the national figure for 2014. A few pupils were entered for the Level 6 assessments this year.

In the early years, there has been a slight improvement in the proportion of children achieving a good level of development, though this remains lower than the national figure for 2014. Improvements have been secured in raising children's attainment in exploring and using media and materials and in being imaginative. The increased focus on writing has raised pupils' achievement in literacy.

Senior leaders have appointed some good teachers. They joined the school at the beginning of the Summer term. Better teaching in Year 2 and Year 3 is starting to make a difference. The new teachers have worked out where pupils have fallen behind and are helping them to catch up. Support from a specialist leader of education is starting to improve teaching in other years.

Improvements are being undermined by an inadequate curriculum. Leaders have not made sure that the curriculum builds pupils' skills well enough over time. Although this is slowly being tackled, the improvements are not being made quickly enough.

The school's action plan sets out appropriate priorities to improve the school but some of these lack clear measurable success criteria to enable clear evaluation of their effectiveness.

Monitoring of teaching has not been rigorous enough. Other pressures have got in the way, such as the need to deal with pressures on the budget and staff redundancies. Improvements have also been held back because of problems with the new electronic data management system. This has caused extra work with the result that the school remains dependent on external support to improve teaching and leadership.

Problems with the data system mean that it is too difficult for senior and middle leaders to check how well different groups of pupils are doing. The new class teacher for Year 2 has been given responsibility to tackle this next term.

Leadership is beginning to become stronger as a result of support from a local leader of education who is a headteacher in another school. However, not all leaders and managers play a big enough role in helping the headteacher improve the quality of teaching and drive other improvements. Where actions have not been completed to time, leaders have not been held to account.

While governors know the school and the challenges it faces well, they have not ensured that senior leaders have focused enough on improving teaching. Governors have now strengthened their monitoring arrangements to ensure that they can check on the schools work, including improvements to teaching, more effectively.

Pupils who I met with reported that they are happy in school and feel safe. They are well informed about the internet and its associated dangers and are able to say what they would do if bullied on line. They say that the Junior Police Cadet Safety Officers look out for everyone in the playground and that the school is a safe place. The school's records show that bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively.

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 employed an education adviser who provides good support and challenge to the school. Funding has been secured to enable staff to work with a local leader of education and specialist leader of education. This support is beginning to improve leadership capacity and the quality of teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Daniel Burton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**