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29 June 2015

Mrs Anne Tester
Headteacher
St John the Baptist Church of England Controlled Primary School
Solomons Lane
Waltham Chase
Southampton
SO32 2LY

Dear Mrs Tester

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St John the Baptist Church of England Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 29 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 not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- strengthen leaders' knowledge of pupils' progress, so that actions to improve teaching can be precisely targeted and evaluated
- ensure the key barriers to moving teaching to good are addressed urgently
- set ambitious targets for pupils' achievement based on accurate knowledge of what needs to be achieved in each subject and year group.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you, other leaders and three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body. I met with a representative of the local authority. I made visits to every class with you and looked at a sample of pupils' work with English and mathematics subject leaders. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including information about current pupils' achievement, leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and records of governing body activity.

Context

Since the inspection five new appointments have been made. These include a mathematics leader and four teaching appointments for Key Stage 2. These posts begin in September. In addition, an inclusion leader and English leader have been appointed from within the existing staff to begin in September.

Main findings

Since the section 5 inspection, you have ensured leaders and teachers recognise and accept the need to make changes to improve outcomes for pupils. Governors are supporting you well in this and have quickly secured the recommended reviews of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium. These have begun and are near completion. You have strengthened appropriate opportunities for pupils to consider and manage risk, particularly prior to making visits off site and in their daily work in school.

Leaders across the school now make more regular checks on the quality of teaching. Middle leaders, in particular, now have a clear role in providing feedback to teachers about their teaching. Governors make a wider range of checks, including looking at pupils' work. These checks, however, do not focus adequately on how well pupils are learning. Leaders do not have a detailed knowledge of pupils' progress from starting points in subjects, year groups and classes. This limits their ability to pinpoint precisely where pupils' progress needs to accelerate and to evaluate accurately the difference their actions are making.

Pupils take more responsibility for their learning now through increased opportunities to respond to teachers' feedback. The new marking policy sets out expectations for this clearly. In Key Stage 1, pupils use the new marking symbols to make changes to basic punctuation and spelling. In Key Stage 2, pupils edit their writing more regularly. However, this initiative alone is not improving the quality and accuracy of pupils' work or improving pupils' progress. The key barriers to moving teaching to good have not been addressed urgently enough. Actions to improve teaching have not prioritised strengthening teachers' subject knowledge in English and mathematics. There has not been a sufficient focus, for example, on developing teachers' ability to respond to pupils' learning in lessons so that activities and

explanations can be adapted quickly. As a result, teaching is not precise enough and pupils' progress has not improved

The school's plan for improvement does not set ambitious targets for increasing rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Current targets are not specific enough to enable governors to hold leaders to account effectively. It is not clear how much progress pupils will make, in which year group and subject and by when. There are no actions to strengthen senior leaders' analysis and evaluation of data.

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 responded appropriately to the school's needs. They have supported governors to ensure the required reviews are underway. Middle leadership coaching is in place for new appointments from September. Additional support is now required to strengthen leaders' knowledge and use of pupil progress data so that targets for improvement are ambitious and measurable. In addition, bespoke support is required to address the key barriers to securing consistently good teaching across key stage 1 and 2.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the diocese of Portsmouth and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

Abigail Wilkinson
Her Majesty's Inspector