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Daniel Woodrow
St Gregory's Church of England (VC) Primary School
Church Street
Sudbury
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Dear Mr Woodrow

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Gregory's Church of England (VC) Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27 November 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 second 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 continuing to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement, identified at the recent section 5 inspection, in order to become a good school. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that plans to support the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning are adequately paced to meet the necessary deadlines for re-inspection within 24 months
- develop a close working relationship with the local authority and access any support that senior leaders recognise as beneficial to the school.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the governing body. A telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority. We reviewed your self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, the review of governance and the review of pupil premium. We discussed the pupil outcomes for

2015 and the targets for 2016. We visited all classrooms as part of an extended tour of the school, looking at examples of pupils' work as we went.

Context

Since my previous visit in July 2015, the deputy headteacher has left. A replacement has been appointed and he is scheduled to start in January 2016. Upper Key Stage 2 has been restructured and the school no longer has any mixed year group classes. You have had two recent appointments to the governing body.

Main findings

Self-evaluation of the school reflects a detailed and accurate picture of the setting and demonstrates that senior leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development. You are fully aware of the actions necessary to bring about rapid school improvement and this is reflected in your school development plan. The pace of these improvements has slowed slightly since September 2015 due to the lack of capacity brought about by the departure of your deputy headteacher. The arrival of your new deputy headteacher in January 2016 will allow you to re-establish your stride and continue on the path of rapid improvement.

A robust monitoring system is in place and includes regular lesson observations, learning walks and book scrutinies, which is giving a more accurate view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. You have developed an informed performance management system that supports continued professional development and allows you to evidence and address any underperformance. Your pupil tracking is integrated into this system and you regularly review pupils' progress against whole school performance indicators.

The pupil premium review has recently been completed and the corresponding improvement objectives are being developed. The review of governance has been completed and all governors are tackling the areas for improvement that were identified. They have developed a systematic review process and plan to monitor the impact of their actions after a sixth-month period. Senior leaders and governors recognise that pupil outcomes, although improving, are not good enough yet.

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 recognises that they have been remiss in not providing the school with sufficient support since September 2015. A Standards and Excellence Officer has now been appointed and will work closely with the school until its next section 5 inspection. The diocese carried out the review of governance, and facilitates the headteacher's performance management.

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. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Pargeter
Ofsted Inspector