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29 October 2015

Mr Matthew Crick
Headteacher
Cartwright and Kelsey Church of England Primary School
School Road
Ash
Canterbury
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Dear Mr Crick

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Cartwright and Kelsey Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 14 October 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 May 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 in order to become a good school.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you and your senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and three governors to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone. You took me on a tour and I visited each class. I evaluated a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan. I also looked at some pupils' books with your subject leaders.

Main findings

You and your leadership team are working diligently to bring about necessary improvements following the inspection. You have rightly concentrated on improving the quality of teaching and learning and your higher expectations are beginning to have a positive impact on the progress of pupils.

During my visits to classrooms, the atmosphere was purposeful and pupils were appropriately engaged in a range of learning activities. You have recently implemented a new approach to the teaching of mathematics. At the beginning of each lesson a range of challenges are set, based on what pupils can already do, which are designed to improve particular skills. Since the work is closely matched to their starting points, pupils approach the tasks with confidence and enthusiasm. Pupils described how they were using these challenges to improve their work and take responsibility for their own progress.

You are using a wider range of approaches to check that teaching is good enough, for example through scrutinising pupils' work. Subject leaders are playing a greater role in gathering this information. They are supported by a local leader of education, who is helping them develop their evaluative skills. A review of books showed that pupils were beginning to use helpful feedback from teachers to improve their work in mathematics and writing. However, the subject leaders were not clear how they are going to measure the impact of their work on improvements to teaching and learning in the school. Middle and senior leaders may well benefit from visits to local outstanding schools to broaden their understanding of effective and ambitious leadership.

Following the inspection, you acted swiftly to improve the systems for checking the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Staff have a greater awareness of the needs of these pupils and a governor is working closely with school leaders to monitor their performance. The recommended review of the use of pupil premium took place in September and found that the school had improved its plans for these pupils. However, there are no clear targets which can be used to regularly check the impact of the different actions taken on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Details of how you intend to spend and evaluate your 2015/16 pupil premium allocation have not been published.

When pupils are identified as falling behind in reading, writing and mathematics, actions are taken to meet their needs through a range of additional improvement programmes. Your data show that in many cases these are effective. In 2015, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check (a national check of pupils' understanding of the links between letters and the sounds they make) increased and was well above the national average for Year 1 pupils. In the 2015 Key Stage 1 assessments, pupils achieved above national averages. At Key Stage 2, attainment was above national levels for reading and writing, but well below for mathematics. However, across the school, disadvantaged

pupils are not narrowing the gaps with other pupils fast enough. The impact of steps taken to address this is not yet clear.

You have appointed a new member of staff to act as a family liaison officer to work with families whose children are regularly absent from school. During the summer term there was some improvement in the attendance of these pupils.

The school improvement plan describes appropriate action to tackle the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report. However, robust systems to evaluate the impact of your actions are not in place. The planned actions are detailed but it is not always clear how these actions will lead to improved outcomes for pupils or what you expect different groups of pupils to achieve at intervals across the academic year. This is important if governors are going to be able to challenge your work in implementing the plan, and understand what impact it is having on the quality of teaching and achievement of pupils. At the beginning of the school year you shared progress data for different groups of pupils and these now form a base against which improvements can be measured. Governors need to be satisfied that targets set are challenging enough, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and the most-able pupils in mathematics.

The recommended review of governance took place in July. Since then, the governing body has become more efficient and effective. Governors receive better information about how well the school is doing and are much more involved with school life. Governors are now asking you for more information about pupil achievement but have not yet been involved in monitoring and evaluating the school improvement plans.

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 school receives effective support from the local authority. A local leader of education's regular visits have helped school leaders improve the way they check the quality of teaching and learning. The school improvement adviser has accurately evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The local authority also supported the school by checking that the school's assessments of pupils' work were accurate.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Kent and the Director of Education for the Diocese of Canterbury. The letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Theresa Phillips
Her Majesty's Inspector