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Peter Treasure-Smith
St Nicholas Chantry Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Highdale Avenue
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Dear Mr Treasure-Smith

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

Following my visit to your school on 5 December 2016, 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 2016. 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.

The school should take further action to:

- develop the mathematics subject knowledge of teachers so that they can confidently teach pupils to use reasoning skills and so improve their depth of understanding.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher to discuss your evaluation of the school's progress since the previous inspection. I also met the interim lead for early years, representatives from the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions that have been taken. We

examined the impact of the actions by visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work in mathematics and writing, scrutinising audits of safeguarding and considering the findings of the external review of the governing body. I also scrutinised the records for vetting the appointment of staff. The school's improvement plan was discussed and evaluated. I considered information on pupils' performance for 2016. I talked to pupils in classrooms and discussed their learning with them.

Context

There have been no new teachers or leaders appointed since the previous inspection. Short-term staff absence has been addressed internally with some teachers taking on additional responsibility. The governing body has recruited two new members.

Main findings

You are leading with determination and have a clear understanding of the progress the school has made since the previous inspection. You have strong support from your deputy headteacher, particularly in leading literacy developments. You and your governing body acted swiftly to begin the process of improvement and expectations have been raised across the school of teaching, learning, assessment and pupils' behaviour.

You made sure that some immediate priorities were quickly achieved. A policy for managing behaviour was established, with all teachers expected to adhere to it. Consequently, there is a consistency of approach across the school and behaviour in classrooms has improved.

You are now able to monitor the progress of pupils more closely and, as a consequence, quickly intervene when progress needs to accelerate. You also have set more ambitious targets for pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, especially in writing. Information is used effectively during discussions with teachers about pupils' progress to offer support and set further challenges.

Most-able pupils now have more challenging tasks to develop a greater depth of understanding. Early evidence shows an impact in their writing, although it is too early to see improvements in mathematics.

You have monitored closely pupils' attendance and taken decisive action to reduce absence for specific pupils. As a result, attendance has improved to above national figures and pupils who are disadvantaged now attend broadly in line with other pupils in the school.

Pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar have been a focus for whole-school development. The literacy lead was aware that boys' spelling had not been strong. The new approach is beginning to improve these important aspects of writing.

You recognise that your work to improve mathematics is not as advanced as that in writing. You are aware that this needs to progress and you have plans to do this.

Governors have strengthened their monitoring of the school. They are better informed through regular discussions with subject leads. They now have developed an independent view of how aspects of the school's work are performing and understand the strengths and areas for improvement. They now challenge leaders effectively and closely monitor the rate of progress of the improvement plan.

External support

The local authority has provided wide-ranging support for teachers and leaders. Using regular, rigorous monitoring and in-depth discussions, school leaders are challenged to maintain the rate of improvement. The improvement plan is used effectively to guide actions and measure success.

Governors have used the external review of the governing body well to become more effective.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Jenner

Her Majesty's Inspector