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Mrs Teresa Fox
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Dear Mrs Fox

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Brighstone Church of England Aided Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 9 May 2017, 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 April 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:

- accurately identify strengths and weaknesses of the school through robust self-evaluation
- strengthen the school improvement plan by including current priorities for improvement as well as those identified in the previous inspection, which have not yet been fully addressed.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). I also met the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and two governors. I conducted a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. You led me on a tour of the school and provided me with a wide range of the school's documentation to scrutinise. We discussed the actions taken since the last inspection. I reviewed pupils' work with your English, mathematics and science leaders. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, there have been significant changes to the leadership and governance of the school. In September 2016, a new headteacher, the SENCo and three new teachers in key stage 2 joined the school. Two teachers have been appointed to the posts of subject leaders for mathematics and science. The governing body has been reformed: there is a new chair and vice-chair of the governing body and five new governors have been appointed. Governors now meet regularly in two committees to review aspects of the school and come together half-termly as a full governing body.

Main findings

Since joining the school, you have provided much-needed stability and ended the rapid turnover of staff. Together with governors, you have effectively supported and retained teachers, which has enabled you to drive improvement at the school. You have taken appropriate steps to address the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection and there are promising signs of impact. However, leaders and governors recognise that there is still much to do.

When you joined the school, four months after the section 5 inspection, you were determined to carry out the recommendations for improvement made in the inspection report. Your detailed improvement plan explains clearly what steps needed to be taken and you and governors review the plan regularly to check for implementation. For example, pupils' work is now subject to greater levels of moderation within the school, by teachers in other schools and by advisers from the local authority. This has reassured leaders and governors that teachers' assessment of pupils' work is accurate.

Since she arrived in September, the SENCo has set out to systematically improve the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Following a careful review of these pupils' learning needs, the SENCo is tracking the impact of different interventions and teaching strategies on pupils' progress, to see what works best for each pupil. This approach has had a positive effect in a short time, but it is too soon to evaluate its full impact.

You, your middle leaders and governors are all clear about the need to improve the performance of disadvantaged pupils. You ensured that all pupils eligible for additional support through the pupil premium grant are now identified and are more closely monitored than previously. Following an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium, you have published a detailed strategy which sets out how you plan to spend the money and measure its impact at the end of this academic year.

You have developed the skills of other leaders well. You have enabled subject leaders to access appropriate training and support, including by local authority advisers. The subject leaders for English, mathematics and science are all relishing the leadership opportunities you have provided. They have benefited from their own training and are working hard to develop the skills and expertise of their school colleagues. The English subject leader is transferring the good practice in reading evident in key stage 1 into key stage 2. She has a clear vision for high standards of writing expected throughout key stage 2 and work in pupils' books shows examples of rapid improvement. She is aware that sometimes the quality of feedback provided by teachers does not consistently meet the expectations of the school's feedback policy.

The subject leader for mathematics has only been in post for a couple of months but also has a clear vision for improvements in teaching and learning. One of his priorities is to further develop problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics, particularly to challenge the most able pupils. The science subject leader, also only in post for a few months, has developed some strong practice in Years 3 and 4, which needs to spread into Years 5 and 6. Her impressive commitment to investigative work is developing pupils' scientific enquiry skills very well indeed.

During my visits to classrooms, the atmosphere was purposeful and pupils were appropriately engaged in a range of learning activities. You were able to point out the positive impact of some actions you had taken. For example, children in Reception Year were showing sustained interest in playing with equipment in the outdoor area, which you have supported the early years teacher with resourcing. Classroom displays illustrate the new approaches to reading, writing and mathematics described by the subject leaders. There is a strong emphasis on art and design throughout the school. My brief review of pupils' work in other foundation subjects in their topic books did not show the same levels of commitment.

The governing body has changed significantly. In the autumn term, some governors stood down and a new chair and vice-chair were appointed. Following a review of governors' skills, five new governors were recruited, with relevant expertise. They are currently undergoing training and new committees are beginning to provide sharper challenge and more effective support to school leaders. For example, governors are reviewing and refreshing the school's website to check that it meets the requirements for publication of information. The governing body is now better

placed to hold school leaders to account, particularly against the priorities for improvement in the current school improvement plan.

However, school leaders, including governors, are still prioritising actions based on the areas for improvement recommended in the previous inspection report. This was over a year ago; since then, performance data for 2016 has been published, and pupils are now completing end of year assessments. It is time for leaders to complete a robust self-evaluation to identify current strengths and weaknesses. Your judgements can then be used to update the school's improvement plan, including targets and milestones for the achievement of groups in the school, such as disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils. This would make it easier for leaders and governors to evaluate the success of actions taken to improve the performance of these groups.

External support

School leaders and teachers are benefiting from effective support by advisers from Hampshire local authority. The school improvement manager offers appropriate challenge and support, and subject and link advisers are helping to improve leadership and teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Theresa Phillips
Her Majesty's Inspector