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Mrs Sue Kay
Headteacher
Partney Church of England Aided Primary School
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Dear Mrs Kay

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

Following my visit to your school on 10 November 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 January 2017. 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:

- increase the opportunities for pupils to reason mathematically
- improve the range of vocabulary that pupils use in their writing.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the early years leader and teacher, a group of pupils, members of the governing body including the

chair and two vice-chairs. I held a phone call with a representative from Lincolnshire local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last monitoring visit. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I met with parents at the start of the school day. I visited every classroom and looked at pupils' work. I also reviewed information relating to safeguarding and attendance.

Context

On 6 June 2017, the local authority issued the school with a warning notice because the local authority judged that action taken to improve the school was too slow. Two teachers resigned this year and two teachers were appointed in September 2017. The pace of change has increased markedly since June 2017. The school is now improving quickly.

Main findings

Leaders are now successfully moving the school forwards. You are leading the school well. You are monitoring the quality of teaching closely and checking pupils' work, providing useful development points for teachers to follow. Teaching is improving.

The school improvement plan is focused on the right priorities to improve teaching and learning. You have consulted with the governing body to ensure that the milestones within the plan are clear and measurable. Consequently, all staff and governors are fully aware of the areas for improvement and how and when they will judge if the actions taken have been successful.

The governing body, after a slow start, is now effectively holding leaders to account. It has benefited from the support of an experienced chair of governors from another local school to help it to ask more challenging questions of school leaders. The minutes of governing body meetings show governors asking pertinent questions about pupils' progress through the school. They have a good understanding of data and compare the school's performance to other schools nationally.

The governing body has sharpened the performance management arrangements for teachers and for you. It has worked with a representative from the Lincolnshire Diocese to set targets for the headteacher's appraisal. The targets set for teachers are closely aligned to the school improvement priorities. Consequently, both teachers and you are being held to account for the actions that you take.

Most teachers have responsibility for leading subjects. Appropriate training is in place to support new staff in their leadership roles. Leaders promote their subjects through delivering training at staff meetings and have started to check on the quality of teaching in other classes apart from their own. Governors also take part in learning walks to further develop their knowledge of how well the school is working.

The leader of the early years works closely with the early years teacher to review planning and the assessments of the children. They have moderated children's work with another school in partnership with the local authority to gain an accurate baseline of children's abilities when they enter the school. They track the children's progress and put interventions in place to support the children's learning.

Last year, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was very low. However, the majority of the children had low starting points and did make good progress but did not achieve a good level of development. These pupils are being closely tracked and specific interventions have been put in place to accelerate their progress in Year 1. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that these interventions are having a positive impact on pupils' progress.

Teachers are beginning to provide more challenging work for pupils. In key stage 1 and lower key stage 2, pupils are being given more opportunities to reason mathematically and to deepen their understanding of concepts. This is less strong in Years 5 and 6. However, leaders have recognised that pupils need to be provided with more challenges in mathematics throughout the school, to enable pupils to make accelerated progress, particularly the most able pupils.

Teachers are providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their writing across different subject areas, particularly in science. Older pupils have written excellent sonnets as part of their Shakespeare studies in Years 5 and 6. However, pupils do not consistently use imaginative vocabulary in their writing to add interest to the reader.

Pupils are presenting their work neatly, both written work and their recording in mathematics. They take pride in their learning journeys. Teachers are consistently using the school's marking and feedback policy, which the pupils understand well.

Pupils' attendance has risen. Last year the attendance of all pupils was in line with the national average and the proportion of pupils who were persistently absent was just below the national average. You monitor attendance rigorously and work closely with parents to overcome potential barriers to good attendance. Pupils are also motivated by the attendance certificates that have recently been introduced.

External support

The support and challenge of the adviser from Lincolnshire local authority has been very effective. Following the inspection in January 2017, she applied for funding which has allowed support to your school from Long Sutton Primary School. This support has had a positive impact. The headteacher from Long Sutton has supported you to write an effective school improvement plan and to set sharp targets for teachers' appraisals. Teachers have benefited by observing good practice at Long Sutton and they have also received support to improve their subject

leadership. The quality of leadership at the school is improving.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Finch

Her Majesty's Inspector