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Mrs Anne Harvey
Headteacher
St Peter's Church of England Primary School Wymondham
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Dear Mrs Harvey

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Peter's Church of England Primary School Wymondham

Following my visit to your academy on 24 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in May 2017. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders, governors and the trust are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good academy.

The academy should take further action to:

- amend the action plan by making expectations clearer to help drive more rapid improvement
- review carefully specific training needs in order to support staff in further improving their subject knowledge and teaching expertise.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the assistant headteacher, subject leaders, members of the local governing body and the senior improvement officer of the trust to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. School improvement plans were evaluated. You and I visited three lessons, and together we looked at a sample of pupils' work. I also looked at the outcomes of monitoring activities and the impact of performance management.

Main findings

You have established a clear direction of travel. You and your staff are focused on addressing the identified areas to help the school to move forward and are committed to bringing about rapid improvement. Since the last inspection, you and your staff have implemented, or are further developing, a wide range of initiatives. Some of these are at an early stage of development and require more time to show their impact on pupils' progress. Nonetheless, there is clear evidence of everyone's work to improve standards.

The focus you have placed on improving writing is improving standards. You are raising teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' work across the curriculum, including the accuracy of pupils' use of spelling, grammar and punctuation in their work. Pupils are aware of this work and the impact it is having. A pupil in Year 6 told me how a classroom resource was helping him to improve his use of vocabulary and another said, 'I am being more careful about my punctuation.' The accuracy of spelling, grammar and punctuation, as well as handwriting and presentation, is however, still inconsistent. You are aware of this and have clearly identified the actions you will take to continue to improve standards.

The subject leader for mathematics is leading and supporting staff in the development of a 'mastery' approach to the teaching of mathematics. The impact of this work is evident in teachers' use of visual imagery and practical apparatus to support pupils' understanding. Teachers are providing pupils in all classes with frequent opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills. Pupils told me how they had improved in various aspects of their learning in mathematics over the last term. Many said they had got better at remembering and using their times tables, at problem-solving and had improved their reasoning skills. Pupils told me that if they find something difficult, they mark one tick on their work and their teacher will help them. Pupils have a good understanding of their own learning and show positive attitudes. They are keen to do well.

You are taking successful action to develop the effectiveness of leadership roles. Subject leaders are now much clearer on their roles, and work effectively with colleagues in other schools to further develop their own expertise. They are increasingly effective in checking standards and leading staff training to support improvements in the quality of teaching. You and they work alongside staff to

support their planning of lessons and provide training and guidance to improve the quality of teaching, including the development of teachers' questioning skills. In the early years, for example, the teacher provided question 'prompts' for children, which helped to give activities clear focus and challenge. The impact of the work to develop questioning skills was evident in the lessons we observed across the school and in pupils' work. Sometimes, however, teachers' use of questioning is not refined enough to check carefully on pupils' understanding or to provide greater challenge to extend pupils' thinking further.

You are leading staff in raising their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils are often given work which is appropriate for their ability. There is clear evidence of leaders' work to bring about improvements in mathematics, spelling, grammar and punctuation as well as handwriting and presentation. The impact of this work is not, however, consistent or secure. Teachers are committed to providing the very best for pupils. The support and training provided for teachers is not, however, as sharp as it could be to further develop teachers' knowledge of different subjects and relevant teaching strategies.

Developing the effectiveness of the governing body in holding the school to account was also identified as an area for improvement at the last inspection. The governing body members are committed to the further development of their effectiveness. They, with the support of the trust, are working with governors in other schools to develop their expertise, for example, in analysing information about pupils' progress. They are becoming more effective in using this information, along with information gathered from regular and increasingly focused school visits to ask leaders challenging questions. The governing body members are becoming more strategic in their approach to their roles.

Your work is supported by an action plan which links directly to the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The plan makes the priorities clear to all staff and effectively links to targets relating to the performance management of staff. It guides meetings you have with staff to discuss pupils' progress. The plan is not as strong as it could be, however, in clearly stating the criteria for success and the actions required to check the impact of the work carried out in order to more effectively hold staff to account. As a consequence, improvements are not as rapid as they could be and the governing body does not have as sharp a focus as it could have in its work to monitor and evaluate standards.

Safeguarding is effective. The single central record of employment checks is thorough and well organised. There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Pupils say bullying is very rare and are confident that staff would resolve any concerns that they may have.

External support

The Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust is providing effective support. The regular visits from the trust's school effectiveness officer and the school's work with the trust's 'working groups' are supporting the development of leadership roles and providing teachers with guidance on how to improve the quality of their teaching, learning and assessment practices.

You have also been proactive in working with other schools, with the support of the trust, to develop leadership roles and support improvements to the quality of teaching. Leaders and the governing body are outward looking and have been proactive in bringing about the required improvements.

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

Yours sincerely

John Lawson

Her Majesty's Inspector