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Mrs Julie Newby
Headteacher
South Cave Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Church Street
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Dear Mrs Newby

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to South Cave Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 19 December 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 May 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At the section 5 inspection before the one that took place in May 2016, the school was also judged to require improvement.

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

The school should take further action to:

- increase the role middle leaders play in supporting senior leaders to bring about improvement at a fast pace
- further develop assessment systems in Year 6 so that the progress pupils make is

accurately measured across the year

- further improve governors' levels of skills and understanding so that they are able to question and challenge actions taken by senior leaders with greater effect.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, senior and middle leaders, pupils, the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of Ebor multi-academy trust who have been providing support for school leaders. The school improvement plan was evaluated alongside a range of school documents. Short visits to lessons were undertaken with you and other senior leaders. You and I also undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work from across the school.

Context

Since the previous inspection staffing within the early years has changed. A new leader has taken up post. All other members of staff within the Reception classes are also new to post.

Main findings

You have welcomed the support given to you since the previous inspection. You and your senior leadership team have worked closely with both the local authority and representatives from Ebor multi-academy trust. This carefully matched support has enabled you to move the school forward. Your vision for the future is now more secure and is shared by staff, parents and pupils.

The school's governing body has changed and developed since the review of governance requested in the previous inspection report was started. However, due to the illness of the reviewer, the process has yet to be finished. Despite this delay, governors have attended further training which they feel has developed their understanding of their role and increased their knowledge of the needs of the school. However, they accept that they need to use their newly acquired knowledge and skills more actively to hold senior leaders to account more effectively and accelerate improvement in areas identified as having weaknesses.

You and the senior leadership team have worked closely with middle leaders to increase their levels of skills and understanding. Overall, middle leaders are beginning to play a more active role, for example in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning within a subject area. However, both you and middle leaders agree that there is more work to be done to develop further the role middle leaders play in bringing about improvement at a fast pace.

The quality of teaching and learning is improving, particularly in the early years. Across the school a new approach to the way in which progress is identified in pupils' books has enabled leaders to identify those pupils who are falling behind more accurately. This coupled with the school's list of the main strengths which define strong teaching has improved the quality of teaching and learning overall. However, there remain inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning in some areas of the school, particularly within lower key stage 2. Work in pupils' books from these classes shows that pupils do not yet make consistently good progress over time.

Overall, teachers' ability to assess the quality of pupils' work has improved since the previous inspection and most now consistently use this information to plan further work. However, the accuracy of assessment of the progress of pupils in Year 6 is not yet secure. As a result, at the time of the monitoring visit it was not possible to accurately assess Year 6 pupils' progress since the start of the school year. The school leadership team is aware of this issue and is working closely with staff to secure this information.

You and other senior leaders were clearly disappointed with the dip in standards reached by Year 6 at the end of last academic year, particularly in reading and mathematics. However, you have analysed the outcomes thoroughly and with the help and support of external partners are dealing with the issues identified. As a result, pupils are currently making stronger progress in reading, writing and mathematics in both key stages 1 and 2. However, the progress of most-able pupils is not yet consistently strong in all areas of the curriculum.

Changes to the curriculum have improved pupils' levels of interest and engagement across the school. This is clearly reflected in pupils' work in books. For example, a pupil questionnaire has been used by school leaders to plan some aspects of the curriculum. A whole-school thematic approach is used to unite the school and overcome the three-tier layout of the school. Pupils and their families enjoy participating in family homework, which both pupils and school leaders describe as getting 'quite competitive' at times.

The previous inspection report requested that a review was commissioned to analyse the way in which you spend pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. The review was carried out in a timely manner and you have been quick to implement suggested changes such as the use of a toolkit to evaluate individual pupils' needs. The introduction of a personalised approach to monitoring pupils' progress across the school has helped to ensure that most pupils are clearly identified. As a result, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is beginning to diminish.

External support

The school has received support from the local authority and Ebor multi-academy trust. The local authority school improvement partner has worked with school leaders to identify the support required to bring about changes needed. The local authority has also helped to negotiate the support from the multi-academy trust.

School leaders have valued the support they have received including the review of governance and pupil premium funding, and have taken effective action to bring about improvement.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of York and the director of children's services for East Riding of Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Marian Thomas

Her Majesty's Inspector