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Mr Lyndon Strong
St John's, Gosport Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Grove Road
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Dear Mr Strong

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St John's, Gosport Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 19 June 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring 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 monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

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 good.

The school should take further action to:

- sharpen systems for monitoring the progress, attainment and attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met you, other senior leaders and staff, governors and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement and action plans were evaluated. I read a range of other documents, including governing body minutes, monitoring visit reports, and school progress information. I reviewed a selection of pupils' work in the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2. Together, we observed teaching and learning in a range of different classrooms. I scrutinised the register of recruitment checks made on staff joining the school.

Context

Since the previous inspection a new headteacher has joined the school. In addition to this, the leadership team has been restructured to incorporate key-stage leaders.

Main findings

Since starting at the school in January 2017, you have wasted no time evaluating the quality of education that the school provides and, ably supported by your leadership team, planning and delivering meaningful improvements to the school. Your plans are comprehensive and sharply focused on eradicating the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. The plans include ambitious targets with useful milestones which allow leaders, governors and local authority officers to review the school's progress and alter any activities which are not effective or do not offer good value for money. Importantly, your plans seek to improve the most pressing and important issues first. This has helped staff and pupils to embed the changes they have made, leaving the school with firm foundations on which it can develop further.

Your efforts to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are well judged and effective. The performance of staff is monitored closely through regular lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, and checks on pupils' performance information. Leaders provide useful support and challenge for staff, particularly in the use of assessment to design tasks which match pupils' needs. This has led to improvements in the quality of teaching.

Pupils' outcomes are steadily improving. Pupils write regularly for a range of purposes, and the majority of pupils are confident writers. For the past three years the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in phonics has risen sharply. Pupils across the school show strong vocabulary and spelling skills. They use a range of punctuation to demarcate sentences well. As a result the proportion of pupils who attain at age-related expectations and reach the higher standard in writing has risen this year. Pupils develop strong mathematical skills. They regularly practise their calculation skills and use these to solve complex problems and to reason in mathematics. This was demonstrated in Year 1 where pupils used counters and tally charts accurately to divide numbers, explaining to their peers how they solved their problems and set out their work. Pupils across the school make strong progress in mathematics.

At the time of the last inspection, pupils' behaviour required improvement. To improve this area of the school's work, you improved the quality of teaching and raised the expectations placed on pupils, opting to keep the long-standing behaviour policy in place. This strategy has been successful. In class, pupils are polite, industrious and eager to do their best. They listen carefully to what their teachers say and are proud of their school. Pupils' presentation, both in their books and in their personal appearance, are very high as a result. Increasingly, pupils

attend school regularly, and rates of persistent absence have been reduced significantly in recent months. Nevertheless, leaders' tracking of the attendance levels of disadvantaged pupils is not sharply focused.

Governors are knowledgeable and well informed. They receive useful information on the work of the school. They check its accuracy, using external advisors and by visiting the school themselves. The recent restructuring of the governing body has ensured that governors have specific areas of responsibility which they monitor closely and report on to the full governing body. For instance, governors have a detailed understanding of pupils' achievements across different year groups because the assessment governor regularly reviews the school's assessment information and shadows progress meetings with senior leaders and teachers. Governors recognise that plans to monitor the pupil premium funding need to be more sharply focused on pupils' outcomes and evaluated to ensure that the best value for money is achieved.

External support

The local authority has provided useful support, particularly for the new headteacher and senior leaders. It has helped to focus improvement plans to ensure that leaders prioritise the right things. Additional support for teachers and leaders has been highly effective, particularly in developing strategies for teaching English and mathematics. Recently, local authority officers worked with governors to help them review their roles and responsibilities, helping governors to keep a sharper focus on the most important aspects of the school's work.

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

Yours sincerely

Daniel Lambert
Her Majesty's Inspector