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16 November 2007

Mr R Freeth
Westminster Church of England Primary School
Westminster Road
Bradford
West Yorkshire
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Dear Mr Freeth

Fresh Start: Monitoring Inspection of Westminster Church of England
Primary School

Introduction

Following my visit with Ann Talboys HMI to your school on 14 and 15 November 2007, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the sixth monitoring inspection since the school opened in September 2005.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of receipt of this letter.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, visited lessons, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders. Discussions were held with the vice chair of governors, Education Bradford and groups of pupils.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit in July 2007, the number on roll has increased to 340. Three teachers have been appointed, including a new member of the senior leadership team. The inclusion leader is also now employed on a full time basis. As a result of recent appointments, teaching arrangements in Years 3 and 4 have been reorganised.

Achievement and standards

National test results in 2007 showed an overall improvement in both pupils' level of attainment and their standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils in Year 6 met, for the first time, national minimum targets for performance in English, mathematics and science. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1 also improved significantly, although they remain low.

Progress overall between Key Stages 1 and 2 is no longer inadequate. Pupils overall made good progress in the lessons seen during the inspection. Through rigorous tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress and attainment, the school continues to raise achievement for all pupils. The school has worked hard to ensure that pupils with English as an additional language also progress well. Strategies are now in place to secure improvements for further targeted groups identified by the school, including White boys and higher ability pupils.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the monitoring inspection in July 2007:

- Ensure the improved progress of all groups of pupils where underachievement has been identified – satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Excellent relationships in the school contribute strongly to pupils' enjoyment of school life. Pupils say they like their lessons and are particularly positive about the change in lunchtime arrangements, giving them greater opportunity to take part in lunchtime activities. They also enjoy receiving rewards and certificates for their achievements. The school council provides an active voice for pupils' ideas and council members take their responsibilities seriously. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Pupils' positive attitudes contribute significantly to their learning. The school continues to improve and sustain good levels of attendance.

Quality of provision

The school has further developed the quality of teaching and learning. Rigorous monitoring of lesson quality by the senior leadership team has resulted in further improvements in both key stages. A high percentage of lessons observed during the inspection visit were good or better.

Planning is comprehensive, with effective differentiated tasks outlined. In lessons, work accurately matches the needs and abilities of all pupils and there are many opportunities for students to discuss their learning in pairs and groups. Where appropriate, pupils are also given the opportunity to assess their peers. Teachers demonstrate a range of questioning techniques, skilfully assessing the levels of pupil

understanding. Pupils respond enthusiastically and are keen to answer and explain their ideas. Classrooms are well organised and the effective use of 'working walls' actively promotes understanding and retention of information. Pupils work hard and they are all positively encouraged to reach higher levels of learning. Marking gives clear guidance on how to improve and pupils say that it also helps them to check if they are reaching their targets. Well-deployed support staff provide very effective help in lessons. Good teamwork ensures that pupils are given targeted support to enable them to understand what is required in lessons in order to achieve the lesson objective.

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has developed both the core and creative curriculum. Numeracy and literacy lessons are now taught in single age groups, which are supported by members of the senior leadership team. Within this context, the school is able to focus more sharply on individual pupils and ensure appropriate challenge for pupils of all ability levels. A review of the creative curriculum, by all staff, has also resulted in greater levels of both enjoyment and challenge for all pupils.

In the Foundation Stage, both teaching and provision are good. The school, however, recognises that the assessment of pupil progress between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 can be improved. The deputy headteacher is working effectively to ensure that the transfer and use of assessment information is both cohesive and accurate.

Assessment systems, however, throughout the school are robust and well understood by all staff. The school has high expectations of pupils and has set realistic yet challenging targets which promote an expectation of 'accelerated progress' for all pupils. Staff are well advised by the assistant headteacher and they use assessment effectively to plan lessons and to target intervention and pupil support. Higher levels of confidence are now evident as teachers use both on going and written assessments to monitor pupil progress. Effective moderation of pupils' work is in place and continues to develop. The monitoring of pupil progress in science, ICT and the foundation subjects is developing in line with school improvement planning.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the monitoring inspection in July 2007:

- Sustain the consistency of good and better teaching and ensure that planned tasks and activities in lessons challenge all pupils effectively – good progress.

Leadership and management

The start of the new academic year has been characterised by a high level of confidence and shared optimism amongst all staff for the school's continued improvement. The headteacher is providing a clear sense of purpose and, together with the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, is articulating a focused agenda to secure and sustain improvement.

Improvement planning is sharply focused on raising pupil performance, with a detailed programme of monitoring and evaluation. Arrangements to monitor how well pupils are doing, for example pupil progress meetings, are highly effective, enabling senior leaders to identify and address underachievement and review staff training needs within the school. Systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning are firmly embedded with a clear emphasis on how well pupils are learning and their resulting progress. Plans to raise attainment across the curriculum through a sustained focus on reading are well-founded.

Under the direction of senior leaders, middle leaders continue to develop. They feel empowered, but accountable in their leadership roles. Presently their responsibilities include action planning and the scrutiny of both lesson planning and pupil workbooks. Monitoring teaching and learning, through joint lesson observations, is a focus for future development. There is a planned programme of high quality leadership training for all senior and middle leaders.

The governing body is well informed and is ambitious for the school to do well. Governors are increasingly confident in challenging developments within the school and are well informed by Education Bradford.

With a clear focus on improving pupil outcomes, the headteacher has firmly yet sensitively managed a number of staff changes within the school. A new senior leader has recently been appointed with a focus on sustaining good teaching and learning across the school. The school's evaluation of itself is well considered and accurate, and is securely based on a shared understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. Although the school values the challenge and support provided by both Education Bradford and an external consultant, it also recognises its own increasing capacity to improve.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the monitoring inspection in July 2007:

- Develop all leaders and managers to be effective in both their individual and collective roles – good progress.

External support

Education Bradford continues to provide very good quality support which is well targeted. The school improvement officer continues to give both appropriate advice

and challenge, as required. Good arrangements are in place to regularly monitor the impact of the guidance and support provided, and this is continuing to strengthen the school's capacity to improve. Additional support and advice on action planning is also provided by an external consultant.

Main Judgements

The school's overall progress – good.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the progress of pupils in identified target groups.
- Strengthen further the effectiveness of middle leaders.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Strategic Director – Services to Children and Young People, and the Managing Director of Education Bradford.

Yours sincerely

Angela M Headon
H M Inspector of Schools