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20 February 2013

Mr Tony Larner
Headteacher
Hartpury Church of England Primary School
Over Old Road
Gloucester
GL19 3BJ

Dear Mr Larner

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Hartpury Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 19 February 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, school staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors. A meeting was also held with a local authority adviser. The school's plan for improvement called the rapid action plan was evaluated and the inspector also looked at documents used by leaders to monitor and evaluate the school's work. The inspector also accompanied the headteacher on a walk around the school.

Context

At the time of previous inspection an acting headteacher was leading the school. The new, substantive headteacher took up their post in January 2013. Since the previous inspection one teacher has resigned from her teaching role but remains the school's special educational needs co-ordinator. One new teacher has joined the staff. A new literacy co-ordinator has been appointed.

Main findings

The new headteacher has high expectations of staff and pupils alike. He is taking effective action to improve the consistency of good teaching across all year groups and raise achievement in mathematics and writing. He has used the recommendations from the previous school inspection together with accurate self-evaluation to set a firm direction for the school to become good. He has secured the support of all staff in this endeavour. There is a positive climate within the school and everyone who was spoken to fully accepted the necessary improvement measures.

A new rapid action plan has been written that clearly addresses the areas in need of improvement identified by the previous inspection. Actions are well judged and planned in a timely way. However, the plan does not make clear who is evaluating the impact of these actions or clearly identify the role of the governing body in this regard.

Clear guidelines on what constitutes good teaching have been developed with all staff along with an agreed lesson observation proforma. The quality of teaching is being robustly monitored and clear advice is given to teachers about how to improve their practice. Good arrangements have also been put in place to share and develop the good practice that exists in the school. These actions are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching across the school.

The progress being made by pupils towards their challenging targets is being tracked well. This information is now beginning to be used more effectively to identify those pupils who are underachieving so that they can be provided with effective support. The tracking system is also being used increasingly effectively to hold teachers to account for the progress being made by pupils in their class.

The local authority has carried out a review of the effectiveness of the governing body and identified some key areas in need of improvement. These include reviewing its committee structure, frequency of meetings and the processes of monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's work to improve teaching and pupils' achievement. The local authority is currently working with the governing body to develop an action plan to address these issues.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- ensure the school's rapid action plan clearly identifies who is evaluating the impact of the actions taken and clarifies the role of the governing body in this process

- strengthen the effectiveness of the governing body by ensuring that all the actions in the local authority's action plan are fully implemented and evaluated.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection. HMI recommend that a further monitoring inspection is carried out within the next 12 months.

External support

The local authority has provided effective support which is assisting school improvement well, particularly through their involvement in the improving schools project group. Effective support has already been given for school leadership and teaching and learning. The local authority has carried out a review of governance and is currently drawing up plans to improve practice. Good plans are in place to support the school in the delivery of their rapid action plan, particularly through training in phonics and reading.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Gloucestershire.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sanderson

Her Majesty's Inspector