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21 June 2013

Mrs Christina Mallender
St Swithun's CofE Primary School
Grove Street
Retford
DN22 6LD

Dear Mrs Mallender

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Swithun's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 20 June 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and of the diocese. The school action plans were evaluated and I looked at documents showing the impact of the actions you have taken. I undertook a brief tour of the school, guided by some pupils, and held discussions with them about the changes taking place.

Context

A significant proportion of the teaching staff is leaving at the end of this academic year. The school has recruited replacements, who will take up post in September. There will then be fewer teachers at the school than currently.

Main findings

You have carried out a range of appropriate activities that are bringing about improvements in the quality of teaching. You have also increased the amount and

thoroughness of activities to check on the quality of teaching. The evidence you have collected through those activities shows that the teachers are putting improvements into practice as a result of the information they are being given. The marking of the pupils' work has improved and teaching assistants are more involved. My discussions with the pupils showed that improvements have been made, but it was clear that the improvements have not had enough time to have full effect.

You have undertaken some very effective work with a partner school that was judged outstanding when it was inspected. The partnership has led quickly to improvements in leadership and management at St Swithun's and provided the teachers with good professional development opportunities. The teachers have used the opportunities to make improvements in their teaching, including involving the pupils in assessing their own work.

Both you and the governors are keen that the school should improve and be judged to be good as soon as possible. It was clear from our discussions that attendance is not good enough and that more action is needed to improve it.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure the consistent and sustained implementation of the recent improvements in teaching, particularly when the new staff join the school
- clarify the role of the governing body in monitoring the progress of the school and ensure action plans are written in such a way as to assist them
- raise attendance towards the national average.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

There is good communication and coordination between the local authority and the diocese to provide support to the school. That has enabled the school to develop a very productive partnership with an outstanding school, which is bringing improvements in the quality of teaching and in leadership and management. I am concerned, however, that the arrangement is due to end shortly without the prospect currently of a replacement. The school has identified other useful sources of support and training for staff, focussed on tackling particular aspects of the areas for improvement. There is not enough support to help the school to improve attendance.

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

Yours sincerely

PROTECT-INSPECTION



Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector