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Catherine Woodbine
Headteacher
Langafel Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Main Road
Longfield
DA3 7PW

Dear Ms Woodbine

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

Following my visit to your school on 18 June, 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 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit I met with you, a representative from the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body and a group of governors to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan, the Ofsted 'link plan' and a range of school documentation was evaluated. This included the school self-evaluation form (SEF), data relating to pupils' attainment and progress and the analysis of that data as well as minutes of recent governing body meetings. You took me on a tour of the school. We made brief visits to all classes looking at the impact of actions taken.

Context

In September 2013, the school will increase in size from nine to ten classes within the mainstream provision. Two members of teaching staff are leaving the school this term and the resulting vacancies have been filled.

Main findings

A strong sense of staff team has been developed and all members of the school community are being challenged to make an active contribution to school improvement. Moral in school is high. Since the previous inspection, teachers have gained a better understanding of pupil data and of their own responsibilities for using this information to inform planning and to raise pupils' achievement. A number of policies and practices have been reviewed and there is now a more consistent approach to managing behaviour and marking pupils' work. There is an atmosphere of ambition and high expectation. This is reflected in the commitment to staff training and also in the rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. This combination of training and monitoring as well as staff modelling good and outstanding practice to one another is successfully driving up the overall quality of teaching in school. Both end of Key Stage 1 and end of Key Stage 2 assessment results are set to improve considerably in 2013 from the previous years.

The school improvement plan, which was written well before the inspection of March 2013, is strongly focused on areas for improvement identified by accurate self-evaluation. The previous and on-going actions have not been halted, but have been further reinforced by the development of an 'Ofsted link plan'. This plan ensures that all weaknesses identified within the inspection are being directly addressed and that at least good standards of leadership, teaching and achievement are being secured. Roles and responsibilities are clearly identified, time-frames are explicit and the role of the Governing Body in monitoring and evaluating progress is clear.

With the support of the local authority, a review of governance and an audit of governors' skills have been completed. Governors now have a detailed plan to direct their future actions. With reviewed roles and responsibilities, governors hold an increasingly clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and of their own part in promoting improvement. The Chair of the Governing Body is undertaking a 'National Leader of Governance' course. Parents and carers are being kept well-informed of school events and activities as well as of any changes. For example, the headteacher and family liaison officer will shortly be inviting parents in to school to hear about the revised behaviour policy.

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 action is taken to:

- ensure governors understand more precisely the strengths and aspects of the school that require improvement to be judged at least good at the school's next inspection and that governors gain a more confident understanding of school data and their role in driving school improvement.

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

The range of high quality and individualised support provided, to governors and staff at all levels, by the local authority is impressive. Support for action planning, joint observations of the quality of teaching and facilitating links with other schools are just some of the ways in which support has been given. This support has been critical in securing the more rapid progress made by pupils throughout the school this academic year. In addition, the school works collaboratively with other school groups, including ten Anglican schools and the large Dartford Schools' Consortium. Many teachers have visited and continue to work with other schools to learn from their experiences and to enhance their own practice. Teachers routinely share this learning with colleagues throughout school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Kent and the Diocese of Rochester.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Macdonald
Her Majesty's Inspector