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Annette Crewe
Headteacher
Hagbourne Church of England Primary School
Main Street
East Hagbourne
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Oxfordshire
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Dear Mrs Crewe

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hagbourne Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 October 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 June 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

- include targets for pupils' achievement in the school improvement plan, including for pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs
- clarify the role the governing body has in evaluating improvements
- make sure middle leaders have a key role in improving the quality of teaching.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I analysed a range of documentation including information about pupils' achievement, records of lesson observations by school leaders, examples of teachers' lesson plans, and minutes of recent governing body meetings. I visited every class to see the pupils at work and looked at a sample of pupils' books.

Context

One teaching assistant has retired and two new teachers have started at the school since the inspection.

Main findings

The headteacher has rightly prioritised improving the quality of teaching. Senior leadership has been strengthened by the appointment of a deputy headteacher. The new teaching and learning policy sets high expectations of teachers. All teachers have had training to help them meet these expectations. Senior leaders check regularly to make sure these expectations are being met, providing precise feedback to teachers and giving extra support when necessary. As a result, lesson observations made by senior leaders show that teaching is beginning to improve. Middle leaders, however, have yet to make a significant contribution to improving the quality of teaching.

The headteacher has raised teachers' expectations about what pupils should achieve in lessons. Consequently, teachers are now starting to match work to pupils' abilities more effectively so that all pupils are challenged more. In addition, pupils' development of early reading skills has begun to accelerate. The new marking policy is beginning to be used by teachers so that an increasing proportion of pupils are clear about what they have done well, and what they need to do to improve their work further.

The school improvement plan was revised after the inspection. This plan contains a range of actions that address the areas for improvement appropriately. Governors played a key role in developing the improvement plan. Importantly, the process for checking on teachers' performance is now more rigorous. However, the plan does not yet feature targets for pupils' achievement, including for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those pupils eligible for the pupil premium.

Governance is improving. Governors scrutinise increasingly detailed information about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. As a result, they are starting to ask more probing questions and to challenge school leaders more effectively. Some governors visit the school regularly in order to gather evidence of improvement, but the role of the governing body in evaluating the school's improvement is not yet clear enough. The external review of governance has been successfully completed, resulting in a number of specific, useful recommendations.

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 headteacher is making good use of a range of support. The school has strong links with two good schools in the area: Long Wittenham Church of England Primary School and Northbourne Church of England Primary School. Leaders and teachers from these schools are working together effectively in a number of ways, including sharing elements of the best teaching, and making sure that teachers' assessments are accurate. The local authority and the diocese are collaborating to provide valuable support and advice for the school. They plan to monitor and evaluate the progress of the school together. The local authority has also conducted the external review of governance and supported the school in the transition to a new data management system.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Haynes
Her Majesty's Inspector