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Nicola Jones
Headteacher
Mepal and Witcham CofE VC Primary School
Brangehill Lane
Mepal
Ely
CB6 2AL

Dear Mrs Jones

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Mepal and Witcham CofE VC Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in November 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, the Chair of the Governing Body, subject leaders for literacy and mathematics, a representative of the local authority and a representative from the Diocese of Ely. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plans were evaluated. The school's single central record was reviewed.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, an additional teacher has been appointed to teach the mixed-aged Years 4, 5 and 6 class. The school has embarked on the process of becoming an academy.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You have responded robustly and quickly to address the weaknesses identified in the section 5 inspection. Supported by all the staff and the governing body, you have made major inroads into eradicating inadequate teaching. Middle leaders are becoming more confident in using assessment information to check the progress all pupils make in lessons and over time. This is because teachers have been given good support and training by advisers from the local authority. Further key training is planned by local authority literacy and mathematics advisers to enable all teachers to embed good practice in handling and interpreting data. You had begun to make significant changes before the last inspection, but have now introduced sound plans to ensure lesson tasks meet the learning needs of all groups of pupils, and to improve pupils' writing skills. Even so, more focus should be given to the needs of the most able pupils.

Although there has not yet been a review of governance, the governing body has improved its methods for checking on the performance of the school. With effective training from the local authority and support from two local authority advisory governors, the governing body has sharpened its monitoring and evaluation procedures. Governors were involved in school planning and they are committed to ensuring the quality of teaching improves. The diocesan school improvement group hopes that this support can be harmonized with diocesan monitoring and evaluation work after academy status has been achieved.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's improvement action plans are fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Cambridgeshire and the Director of Education for the Diocese of Ely. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Peter Limm
Additional Inspector