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Avril Moore
Headteacher
The Mareham-le-Fen Church of England Primary School
School Lane
Mareham-le-Fen
Boston
PE22 7QB

Dear Mrs Moore

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Mareham-le-Fen Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. 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 2014. 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with the headteacher, the vice-chair of governors, the school's mathematics coordinator, and a representative of the local authority. I evaluated the school's improvement plan and read a summary of the most-recent discussions between the school and a national leader of education, who is providing support to the school. I toured the school, visiting all classrooms, and held discussions with some pupils.

Main findings

The actions you have taken are beginning to have a positive effect. The governing body is implementing actions as part of a plan drawn up as a result of an external review of governance carried out with the support of the local authority. It has

organised training to increase the skills of governors and revised its structures and the roles of individual governors, so that it is now able to monitor the work of the school effectively. It is, increasingly, holding the school's leaders to account and setting priorities for improvement, for example, with regard to the achievement of particular groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs. The school's leaders are examining the impact of the provision for these pupils more closely, as a result.

There are early indications that the achievement of the pupils has improved as a result of the actions you have taken and that their attendance has improved also. You have improved the marking of the pupils' work and I saw evidence of some consistent practice by the teachers. The pupils with whom I spoke understood the marking. They were able to explain how well they were doing and what they needed to do to improve. They told me how, routinely, they are now able to respond to the marking and make corrections.

The teachers are assessing the pupils' work more accurately as a result of work you have carried out to help them identify levels correctly. They are, consequently, providing better guidance to the pupils on how to get to higher levels and setting more work that provides the pupils with an appropriate level of challenge. The pupils confirmed that, mostly, they are getting work that is at the right level, although I did see evidence of some work that the pupils were finding easy and which was not capturing their interest.

All of the staff have undertaken training on conceptual understanding in mathematics. The school's calculation policy has been re-written. These two actions combined have led to more problem-solving activities for the pupils in mathematics lessons and greater use of equipment to make the lessons more practical. The pupils are finding mathematics lessons more interesting, as a result, and so their motivation to do well has increased.

Your improvement plan has some good points and is focussed on the areas for improvement from the inspection. It does not, however, make sufficiently clear who will do what and when, including regarding how progress with the plan will be monitored and evaluated.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. I recommend that I stay in contact with the school and that a further visit takes place to monitor the progress of the school, with particular reference to improvements in leadership and management.

External support

The school has benefited from some effective external support, notably the review of governance and subsequent action carried out by the local authority. The school is still at a very early stage in developing a relationship with a national leader of education. There is not, however, a clear and coherent programme of support focused on the needs of the school that brings together the work of all the external partners working with the school. That makes it difficult for the school to incorporate all of the support effectively into its own plans and actions.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire and the director of education for the Lincoln diocese.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector