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Miss Helen Bent
Headteacher
Hucknall National Church of England (VA) Primary School
Montague Road
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Dear Miss Bent

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hucknall National Church of England (VA) Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 July 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, meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I visited every class and spoke informally with pupils about their work. I scrutinised additional school information, including the progress data for pupils. I also scrutinised a selection of pupils' books. The single central record was checked.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection two class teachers will be retiring at the end of the school year. Two cover supervisors have been appointed from among the existing support staff team.

Main findings

It is clear that you and the deputy headteacher are determined to bring about the necessary improvements to address the key issues identified at your last inspection. Your plans for improvement are clear and measureable. Timescales for improvement are sharp and demonstrate that you expect improvements in pupils' outcomes quickly. It is clear that the governing body actively check the quality of your work through frequent visits to school. However, the governing body's strategic role is not clear within your improvement plan.

You have created greater opportunities for subject leaders to check the quality of work in their subjects. Through your positive and enabling leadership, they have grown in confidence to challenge their colleagues to improve the outcomes for pupils. Subject leaders check the quality of work in pupils' books, lead staff training, and report to the governing body about the impact of their work. As a result, leadership is better distributed across the school and is having a greater impact on improvements in teaching. Consequently, pupils are beginning to make accelerated progress in reading and mathematics in particular.

You have quickly identified the areas of strength and weakness in the quality of teaching. You plan professional development for teachers that is closely matched to their needs. Systems for checking the quality of teaching are robust. As a result, there is a growing understanding among staff that you are holding them to account for the outcomes of pupils in their classes. This can be seen in the improvements in the quality of teachers' marking. In the best examples, marking tells pupils how to improve their learning and teachers check pupils' responses to ensure they have understood what is required of them. However, some comments are not sharp enough to improve the quality of learning in all classes significantly.

Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved. Closer attention is paid to the next steps for learning so that adults plan activities that meet the needs of children more precisely. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader ensures all adults understand the learning journeys of children and, as a result, children are making better progress in this key stage. This year a greater number of children achieved a good level of development than in the previous year.

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 local authority has brokered an effective partnership between the school and Mapplewells Primary School. School leaders have valued the input from the headteacher and her staff to improve the quality of teaching and leadership. The local authority has carried out a review of leadership and management and offered

pertinent advice to the governing body and senior leaders on ways to further improve the effectiveness of monitoring within the school. It has also moderated the teacher assessments in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

Yours sincerely

Jan Connor
Her Majesty's Inspector