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Dear Mrs Page

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Saviour's C of E Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27 November 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring 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 September 2017. The monitoring inspection 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 in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- continue to work with parents and carers to raise levels of attendance, particularly for those who take extended leave or who are persistently absent from school
- continue to build upon the improvements made in teaching and learning to further strengthen the progress pupils make, especially boys, the most able and those who are disadvantaged.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders and three members of the governing body. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority. Visits were made to classrooms to look at learning and the work in pupils' books. Pupils met with the inspector to talk about their learning and share their work. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Other documents were evaluated, including information about pupils' progress and attainment and evidence of leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching.

Context

Since the last section 5 inspection in September 2017, senior leadership has been strengthened by the external appointment of a deputy headteacher in January 2018. An early years foundation stage leader has been appointed. Temporary middle-leader roles in English and mathematics and the key stage 1 lead have been made permanent. Two newly qualified teachers joined the school in September 2018. Two new governors and a clerk to the governors have been appointed.

Main findings

Leaders and governors responded with determination and drive to the outcomes of the previous inspection. They set about systematically tackling the areas requiring improvement. They made good use of external reviews to identify further areas for development. For example, questions highlighted in the external review of the use of the pupil premium funding carried out in February 2018 help leaders and governors focus deeply on the impact of this grant. Leaders ensure that areas identified in external reviews are incorporated into a single plan, driving the shared vision of a good education for all pupils.

The post-Ofsted action plan used to drive immediate improvement has evolved into a single school development plan. It is sharply focused on the areas for improvement. Priorities are made clear, although leaders recognise the focus on most-able pupils is limited at the present time. All leaders, including governors, have a shared understanding of what the priorities are and what is being done to address them.

Leaders have established a rigorous monitoring plan. They routinely check the impact of the actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders ensure that they check in more than one way. For example, they carry out learning walks, look at pupils' work and analyse assessment information to reassure themselves that actions taken are making a difference to the quality of education provided. Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching and provide teachers with clear feedback. Areas for development are identified. Leaders know the importance of following these up to ensure that improvements are being

sustained. Through joint monitoring activities, senior leaders support middle leaders to develop their accuracy in assessing the impact of their actions.

The quality of teaching has improved, as a result of effective training and support provided by senior leaders and subject leaders. Teachers have developed skills in questioning to check what pupils know and can do. They use this information to plan appropriate sequences of learning and challenge pupils further. Pupils work independently for longer periods of time. During the monitoring inspection, all pupils were highly engaged in their learning. Teachers have generally raised their expectations of what pupils can do, although some work is still not challenging enough.

Pupils enjoy work that challenges them. When they met with the inspector, pupils said they did their best learning when they had to think hard. They demonstrate resilience and positive attitudes to learning. They particularly enjoy the reading challenges set for them. Manners are exemplary. Pupils show a willingness to include and respect everyone, stating: 'we are all equal, but we are all unique too.'

Leaders analyse pupils' outcomes in great detail. Pupils' progress, especially that of boys, those who are disadvantaged and the most able, is discussed regularly with teachers. Senior leaders identify where further work is needed to reduce the difference from national averages. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics increased at the end of both key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2018. Outcomes are now much closer to national averages at the expected standard. Leaders acknowledge there is still more work to do to enable more pupils to reach the higher standards.

Reading is a key priority for improvement. As a result of training led by the English leader, a consistent approach is evident across the school. Pupils are developing skills in a range of reading strategies, such as background knowledge, visualising and inference. They use them confidently when tackling an unfamiliar text. A leader for phonics has been identified and given the task of supporting teachers to improve the teaching of phonics, so that more pupils reach the expected standard at the end of year 1. This aspect did not improve in 2018 as a result of complex issues with the cohort of pupils. Leaders are currently addressing these issues through intervention and support for current Year 2 pupils.

Governors welcomed the review of their role in January 2018. They acknowledge that previously they did not fully understand their role in challenging school leaders. They admit that they were too accepting of information shared by leaders. This is not the case anymore. Governors are highly effective in holding leaders to account. They probe and ask challenging questions. Rigorous processes and systems put in place by the new clerk to the governing body enable governors to carry out their duties effectively.

Attendance is below national averages and many pupils take extended leave from school. Many parents underestimate the impact that missing occasional days from school has on their child's attainment and progress. Leaders do not authorise holidays in term time. Absence from school is tracked carefully and appropriately challenged. Leaders follow up absences with phone calls, home visits and by issuing formal letters. These actions are not yet having an impact; parents still choose to take their children out of school. Leaders know that pupils who are missing school too often are making less progress. Leaders fully understand the need to improve attendance levels across the school.

External support

The local authority has commissioned effective support, training and challenge since the last inspection. Regular reviews and round-table discussions with a 'priority partner' help leaders reflect on the impact of actions taken to improve the school. The support provided for middle leaders is helping them to develop their skills in evaluating the impact of their work more accurately. The link with a local outstanding school enables leaders and staff to see good practice in action. The school continues to benefit from involvement in a local authority strategic school improvement fund project focused on reading.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the diocese of Birmingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Harwood

Her Majesty's Inspector