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12 July 2013

Mr Calvin Henry
Executive Headteacher
St Mark's CofE Primary School
Sussex Way
London
N19 4JF

Dear Mr Henry

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Mark's Primary School, London, N19 4JF

Following my visit to your school on 11 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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 May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders, teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the Diocese of Southwark, the Director of Children Services and the Head of School Improvement from the local authority. A brief review of classrooms was undertaken with you, informal discussions were held with pupils and work books were scrutinised. The school's self-evaluation document and improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection, a class teacher has left the school. This left two class teacher vacancies, as another class is currently taught by a temporary teacher. Both posts have now been filled, with permanent appointments starting in September 2013.

Main findings

The school's action plans have been revised well. They realistically incorporate steps needed to address the areas for improvement noted in the section 5 report. You report that all year groups have made faster progress because of the actions taken. The predicted results for Year 2 and Year 6 mostly suggest good improvement on 2012, except for Year 2 in writing. The post inspection action plan is very ambitious and includes specific actions and clear success criteria that are linked to timescales. However, a few timescales are too long. Milestones have not been included to help you and other leaders know whether or not the actions taken have been successful.

Under the strong guidance and support of the executive headteacher, senior and middle leaders are making good progress in developing their roles. They are also improving achievement especially in writing and mathematics in most year groups. Senior leaders other than the executive headteacher are leading pupil performance meetings with teachers. These meetings are giving leaders and teachers a better understanding of where additional pupil support is required across all year groups. There is an improved level of accountability, as teachers are now responsible for deciding what needs to be done to improve pupils' achievement in their classes. This is mirrored for support staff who are leading small group or individual interventions. Lesson reviews are undertaken well and there is good support from the local authority and the diocese to improve the quality of teaching. Teachers say they have been well supported to improve their teaching, particularly in literacy. This support has enabled teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment in writing to be more consistent. Pupils talk about the increased focus on writing and also say they are enjoying the subject more. For example, the 'Master Chef Day' held in July helped pupils to write reports of real events. The displays around the school and in classrooms promote writing well. Writer of the week is celebrated well and is motivating pupils to produce better standards of writing. Writing is also celebrated and shown in newsletters to parents. Reading interventions are helping to improve the weakest readers. Pupils also say that mathematics topics are starting to be more interesting.

Professional development activities for teachers are focusing on key weaknesses outlined in the section 5 report. Individual support for teachers is improving the quality of teaching and as a result, monitoring indicates that there is no more inadequate teaching. Recent improvement in teaching is also linked to the more robust use of performance management that is holding staff to account effectively. The Chair of the Governing Body and other governors are highly knowledgeable about the school's weaknesses, strengths and the priorities that need to be addressed. Governors meet regularly to discuss pupils' rate of progress with leaders. Governors are also evaluating all areas of the school's work and are currently reviewing their own contribution to school improvement.

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 clear dates in the improvement plan and add milestones that the school needs to meet in order to assess how well actions have been completed before the end of the school year.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The support by the local authority and the diocese is focused and effective in improving the quality of teaching and developing middle leader. There are good support strategies in place to ensure that the leadership capacity continues to be strengthened.

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

Yours sincerely

Samantha Morgan-Price
Her Majesty's Inspector