

Tribal
1-4 Portland Square
BRISTOL
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk
Direct T 0845 123 6001
Direct F 0117 315 0430
Email: rebecca.jackson@tribalgroup.com



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Mrs L Moorhouse
Headteacher
Launton Church of England Primary School
Bicester Road
Launton
Bicester
Oxfordshire
OX26 5DP

Dear Mrs Moorhouse

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Launton Church of England Primary School

Thank you for the help which you, your staff and the Chair of the Governing Body gave when I inspected your school on 10 March 2011, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection.

Since the last inspection, there have been a number of long-term absences of staff as a result of illness or maternity leave. The school has had to cope with the death of a teacher. The turnover of teachers has been high. Most of the teachers currently employed in the school have joined since the last inspection. During this inspection, one teacher was unwell and absent from school.

The organisation of the school into classes was changed in September 2010 when an additional part-time teacher was appointed. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 are now taught in single year group classes in the mornings, while those in Years 5 and 6 are taught together. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to be taught in mixed-age classes in the afternoons. The school accommodation has been improved, with the addition of a large hall and new classroom.

As a result of the inspection on 2 and 3 July 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.



Attainment is broadly average and improving. Considerable improvement was evident in pupils' performance at the end of Year 6 in the national tests in 2010, especially in mathematics. These results represented satisfactory progress in relation to pupils' starting points and capabilities. Across the school, pupils' work shows that they are currently making satisfactory progress in writing. The school's assessment data indicate that pupils continue to do better in reading than in writing.

As a result of the main areas identified for improvement at the last inspection, this inspection focused on the effectiveness of provision for pupils in Years 1 to 6, particularly in writing. The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall and good in Years 5 and 6. In all classes, relationships between pupils and adults were good, showing that the supportive and caring environment noted at the last inspection has been maintained. Most pupils were interested in the content of their lessons and those in Years 5 and 6 demonstrated exceptionally good attitudes and behaviour.

In most of the lessons seen, teachers were successful in keeping the whole-class introductory session focused and not too long. In the most effective teaching, in Years 5 and 6, the lesson got off to a brisk start and every moment was used well to promote learning. Often, in the lessons seen, paired discussion was used effectively to develop pupils' understanding. There continue to be occasions, however, when not enough is expected of pupils. The work in pupils' books shows that there is still inconsistency in how well pupils develop their writing skills in different year groups. While pupils in some year groups are provided with a varied range of activities to help them to develop ideas through writing at length, this is not the case in all year groups.

Some examples of good marking are evident, ensuring that pupils know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. The most effective marking requires follow-up from the pupils to ensure that it has an impact on learning. Pupils respond positively when asked to do so. However, the quality of marking remains inconsistent. In some year groups, this is a factor preventing pupils from making more progress.

The amount of monitoring of the school's work has increased. The appointment of an additional part-time teacher has provided the headteacher with more time to undertake monitoring activities and has also allowed subject leaders to check the effectiveness of provision in their areas. The teacher responsible for English has, for example, undertaken some good evaluation of provision to help to drive improvement. The impact of this is evident in some classes in which marking has improved as a result of her guidance to colleagues. The governing body is more directly involved in the school's self-evaluation than it was previously. Although the school is working to improve its evaluation of how effectively teaching contributes to



learning, not all of its evaluation is sufficiently rigorous. This lack of consistently sharp analysis of the impact of provision on progress prevents the school from making an even better rate of progress with improvement. Collective responsibility and accountability for pupils' attainment and progress have developed but are not yet fully established.

The school values the support provided by the local authority. This has contributed positively to the professional development of staff and has contributed to improvements in provision.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger
Additional Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2009

- Raise standards in writing across the school by building more challenge into assignments.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning so that all pupils achieve well.
- Increase the rigour of monitoring at all levels to measure the impact of initiatives on pupils' learning.