

Tribal  
1–4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524 **Direct T** 0117 3115319  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk **Direct F** 0117 3150430  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) **Direct email:** matthew.parker@tribalgroup.com

21 September 2012

Mrs Teresa Homan  
Headteacher  
Bapchild and Tonge Church of England Primary School  
School Lane  
Sittingbourne  
ME9 9NL

Dear Mrs Homan

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Bapchild and Tonge Church of England Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 20 September 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass my sincere thanks to the pupils, governors, the key stage leaders, subject coordinators and local authority officer who generously gave their time to talk to me.

Since the last school inspection, there have been changes in teaching staff. A newly qualified teacher has recently been appointed in Year 3.

As a result of the inspection on 8–9 February 2012, 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 is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Following the last inspection, the school has strengthened capacity in governance and leadership. Consequently, leaders and managers monitor pupils' progress more effectively but weaknesses in teaching have not yet been fully eradicated. The national results in 2012 indicated that attainment at Key Stage 1 was similar to the previous year but had declined at Key Stage 2. There was marked variability in the progress made by pupils of different abilities across reading, writing and mathematics. In Key Stage 2, pupils of all abilities made good progress in English, but less than expected progress in mathematics. The school recognises that more pupils should be attaining the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1. The school is now rightly prioritising professional development in

mathematics, phonics and writing skills, in particular, for the teaching of more-able pupils across both key stages. Improved use of data ensures that the school is able to identify in which year group, ability level and subject a pupil's progress has plateaued or receded. The school acknowledges that consistently accelerated progress remains necessary to address the legacy of underachievement. Those individuals who are not on track to make expected or better progress are now closely monitored.

Some instability in staffing has slowed the progress towards improving the proportion of good and better teaching. Observations by the inspector with the headteacher confirmed the school's view that the quality of teaching still varies too much. Discussion with the local authority supported this view. Through visits to other schools to observe outstanding and good practice, staff have introduced differing teaching approaches. For example, the new 'accelerated reader programme' has resulted in encouraging boys to read more widely. Some improvements to the quality of teaching ensure the overall learning objective is introduced promptly at the beginning of lessons and that pupils begin their group and independent learning more quickly. However, planning does not yet cater consistently for the range of abilities in each class. As a result, the activities are not well adapted to ensure sufficient challenge is provided in every case. This is especially evident in some literacy and religious education lessons, where teachers do not extend pupils' learning through matching reading and writing tasks to their needs. There is now greater emphasis on setting appropriate targets for pupils, and these are monitored systematically by senior leaders. Nevertheless, lesson activities and tasks are not always well matched to these individual pupil targets. The marking of pupils' work, although improved, does not consistently provide structured guidance and follow-up actions for pupils. This is particularly the case in relation to writing skills and mathematics.

The school has made reasonable progress in improving pupils' reading skills. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 now have good opportunities to read to adults and to read independently. Parents and carers are much more involved in their children's reading through home-school diaries. Lower-attaining pupils, although able to confidently sound out words, sometimes struggle when blending sounds into words. Since the last inspection, the linking of letters and sounds (systematic phonics) has an improved profile in the school. Consequently, a number of older pupils are demonstrably more adept in using these skills for accurate spelling and reading for meaning.

One of the most significant improvements noted at this monitoring visit is the behaviour of pupils. Behaviour was judged to be satisfactory overall at the last inspection as, notably, learning was often interrupted by pupils not being fully engaged in their learning tasks and activities. There is a positive climate for learning in the classrooms and pupils work well independently and with peers. Attendance is above average.

The school is continuing to develop its leadership capacity. Senior leaders and the governing body are in a stronger position to sustain improvement. Middle leadership is still developing. Substantial training undertaken by subject leaders is being evaluated for its impact. Job descriptions of staff are currently being revised in line with the new Teaching Standards. The governing body has been proactive in monitoring the school through utilising the skills and knowledge of its members. New members of the governing body appointed last year were well supported by peer mentors in understanding their responsibilities. The governing body has rightly identified the need to challenge the school further in improving the quality of teaching.

The local authority's statement of action was judged by Her Majesty's Inspectors to be fit for purpose. The local authority has a realistic view of the school's progress and continues to provide consistent support for the school through teaching advisers and subject specialists.

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

Meena Wood  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2011**

- Increase pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by December 2012 by:
  - improving lower-attaining pupils' reading through systematically developing their phonics skills
  - improving pupils' spelling and helping them to systematically apply phonics
  - improving the progress made by the more-able pupils in mathematics
  - ensuring there are opportunities for lower-attaining pupils to read and be heard reading every day.
  
- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching by:
  - ensuring that work is always pitched at the right level for all pupils, especially the lower attaining and more able
  - using professional development to increase teachers' subject knowledge and providing opportunities for them to observe and apply good practice
  - ensuring lesson introductions are not too long and provide enough time for pupils to complete work.
  
- Increase the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels by:
  - rigorously monitoring teaching for its impact on the progress of different groups and giving clear guidance to help teachers improve
  - providing training for middle leaders so they can give high quality support to colleagues and take a full part in raising achievement
  - ensuring the school improvement plan clearly shows the attainment targets for pupils in all year groups
  - strengthening governors' skills so that they are better able to evaluate the impact of initiatives on raising achievement.