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30 November 2012

Sarah Ward
Headteacher
Bulford Church of England Primary School
John French Way
Bulford Village
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP4 9HP

Dear Ms Ward

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Bulford Church of England Primary School, Wiltshire

Following my visit to your school on 30 November 2012, 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 October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, the English subject leader, who also leads Key Stage 1, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader and the school improvement adviser (SIA). A meeting was held with members of the governing body and six governors attended. The school development and improvement plan (SDIP) was evaluated, and documentation about performance management was discussed. The headteacher took the HMI on a tour of the school to look at teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

Context

Over three quarters of the pupils are from military families. A high number of pupils join and leave at times other than the usual time of entry. Since the inspection 14 pupils have left and 19 have joined.

Two teaching assistants have left since the inspection and have been replaced. An additional teaching assistant has been employed to help pupils who receive support through extra government funding, known as the pupil premium. Approximately three quarters of the pupils are eligible.

Main findings

The headteacher is tackling weaknesses in teaching in a forthright way. Since the inspection, she has overhauled how teachers' performance is measured and managed. Information from observing teaching, looking at pupils' work, teachers' marking and lesson planning, is put together to get, 'the big picture' of how well teachers are performing. Added to this, teachers have targets to make them more accountable for the progress their pupils make. The headteacher has planned for senior teachers to expand their leadership roles. Leaders now guide colleagues in planning activities, watch teachers teach, and follow up with practical suggestions. Extra government funding is being spent on staffing so that pupils having extra help, with English and mathematics, are now working in smaller groups or on their own with an adult.

The school's improvement plan focuses convincingly on improving teaching and learning and includes how the governors contribute to this within given time frames. Governors say they now know what is expected of them. However, some parts of the plan are not clear-cut enough for leaders and governors to check if teaching is improving, such as how long teachers talk and how much time pupils have to get on with their own work.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- adjust the improvement plan to include a more precise focus for leaders and governors when observing teaching, as this will help leaders keep a check on whether actions taken have been successful in improving the quality of teaching and raising attainment.

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

External support

The school draws effectively on the support from the school improvement adviser, such as engaging in helpful discussions about what is working well and what needs to be done. The local authority adviser for the Early Years Foundation Stage has encouraged staff to make changes in their classroom organisation and the advice given has been well received. A local experienced governor has met with the governing body to discuss a plan of support.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Wiltshire and as below.

Yours sincerely

Jane Neech

Her Majesty's Inspector