

Tribal  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 0117 311 5323  
**Direct email:** suzy.smith@triblagroup.com



21 May 2013

Mrs N Darby  
Headteacher  
West Witney Primary School  
Edington Road  
Witney  
OX28 5FZ

Dear Mrs Darby

### **Requires improvement: monitoring visit to West Witney Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 21 May 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you, other senior leaders and three governors including the Chair of Governors. I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. You showed me round the school and we visited every class. I looked at pupils' work and teachers' marking, teachers' planning, records of the monitoring of teaching, the school's information about pupils' current achievement, and a range of other school documentation. I evaluated the school's improvement plan.

### **Context**

Four new members of staff have been appointed for September 2013, including a deputy headteacher. Two senior leaders have left. One new local authority governor has been appointed.

## **Main findings**

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The new improvement plan is focused solely on these areas, and it consists of sharply defined and appropriate actions. The headteacher's determined leadership has led to progress in all areas.

Leaders observe teaching regularly and give teachers high quality feedback about how to improve further. The records of these observations show that teachers are spending less time talking at pupils and more time engaging pupils actively in their learning. Teachers' planning has improved so that pupils, including the brightest, are given work that stretches them. Teachers' marking is beginning to improve because they are giving pupils clear information about how to improve their work, including their writing. Teachers have received a wide range of training since the section 5 inspection, including about how to assess pupils' writing accurately. The school's detailed information about pupils' progress shows that, overall, pupils are making better progress. In some classes, however, progress is less even. Across the school, there is still a gap between the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals and that of other pupils.

The headteacher has restructured the leadership team, rightly focusing all leaders' roles on improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement. All members of this new team will be in place in September 2013, but the leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is already in post. She has acted quickly to improve the teaching of phonics, for example by observing lessons regularly, planning lessons with teachers and then teaching alongside them, and by sharing the best practice in the school. She checks pupils' progress in phonics regularly. Her checks show that pupils are now making better progress.

The governing body has very recently undertaken an external review provided by the local authority, the findings of which have yet to be published. Governors have conducted their own internal review of their strengths and weaknesses. As a result, they have rightly increased the frequency of meetings and sensibly reorganised the committee structure so that they can monitor the schools' progress more effectively. Governors visit the school more regularly to gather first-hand evidence of improvements. They now receive more detailed information about pupils' achievement, including that of pupils eligible for free school meals, which is allowing them to begin to challenge the school more effectively. The governors' role in evaluating the impact of actions in the improvement plan, however, is not clear.

The headteacher has made good use of the support offered by the local authority. For example, support from a leading teacher of mathematics has helped to improve teachers' planning and the teaching of mathematics. The school intervention leader has supported the development of the improvement plan. She also monitors the progress the school is making, although her reports do not always make clear

judgements about how well the school is doing or give recommendations for subsequent actions. Support from a literacy consultant has been slow to materialise, although it is now in place.

Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- set clear and challenging targets for increasing the proportions of pupils exceeding expected progress
- accelerate the progress of those pupils eligible for free school meals in order to close the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils
- clarify the role of the governing body in evaluating the school's improvement and set dates by which the various improvements will be achieved
- ensure that local authority reports make clear judgements and recommendations.

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

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Haynes  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**