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Geraldine Shackleton  
Headteacher  
St George's, Bickley, Church of England Primary School  
Tylney Road  
Bromley  
BR1 2RL

Dear Ms Shackleton

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St George's, Bickley, Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 23 May 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 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit I met with you and the deputy headteacher, senior leaders, a small group of teachers and teaching assistants, two members of the governing body and the school improvement partner, representing the local authority. I toured the school with you, visiting every classroom, and met a group of pupils from Year 5 and Year 6. I scrutinised a range of documents including action plans, pupil progress data, school monitoring evaluations, and professional development plans.

**Context**

There have been no significant staff changes since the last inspection. Two vacancies on the governing body have arisen, both of which are in the process of being filled. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is now a member of the senior leadership team.

## **Main findings**

The school's action plan has appropriate actions to tackle the weaknesses identified by the previous inspection and provides an effective stepping stone for longer term planning. The headteacher, who took up post shortly before the inspection, and her new senior leadership team have deepened their knowledge of the school, and have refined the plan accordingly to ensure that issues are tackled with greater urgency. Success criteria are clear but they lack quantifiable data to measure progress. Rigorous review of school data is helping senior leaders and teachers set higher expectations for pupils' achievement, and outcomes are now being linked to performance management. The school is aware that it needs to extend the timeline of the plan and provide greater clarity in the proposed actions, with milestones and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating progress.

The newly appointed senior leaders are leading with more confidence and consequently, having greater impact in driving improvement. Leaders have a very secure understanding of where teaching is weakest. They have acted with speed to put in place support and development programmes for a few staff. They have clearly explained to teachers what is expected of them and provided appropriately timed training to help them all improve. Lessons are now moving at brisker pace, and pupils are clearer as to what they are going to learn in each lesson. Teachers in all phases are now working together to share ideas, plan lessons and observe good practice. This is leading to better and more consistent teaching. However, teachers have not all had the opportunity to observe good and outstanding teaching in other schools. As a result, teachers are not observing best practice in action or seeing how high quality teaching can be sustained over time.

Marking is enabling all pupils to receive help in how to improve their work in all subjects. Almost all pupils respond to these comments and any challenges they are given. However the quality of feedback and help remains inconsistent. Pupils' work is often untidy in its presentation and teachers are not ensuring sufficient accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Governors have received training from the local authority. They are making more frequent visits to school gain greater understanding of the school and its progress. They are using their expertise and greater knowledge of the school to provide greater challenge, while still recognising the importance of being supportive. They are very aware of the remaining inconsistencies in teaching and how the school is working to ensure greater consistency and better quality teaching. However, their role in monitoring the action plan has not been specified.

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:

- extend the time frame of the school development plan to cover all of the next academic year, making it sharper and clearer, and with more specific interim milestones to monitor and evaluate its impact
- explicitly define governors' roles in monitoring the school development plan
- set higher standards for presentation and accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar in all writing.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The school is making good use of a range of sources to further school improvement, including a National Leader of Education who was supporting the school prior to the inspection. The local authority is providing appropriate and targeted support, including some additional funding. A school improvement partner has been appointed and has started to work with the school. Advisers are working with the school. They have, for example, provided support in behaviour management and training for staff in the use of phonics to improve reading at Key Stage 2. The Diocese has helped the school make use of the local Church of England Schools Partnership, providing some opportunities for teachers to visit and observe good practice.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Bromley, and the Diocese of Rochester.

Yours sincerely

Angela Corbett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**